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THE FUTURE OF JAPAN

WITH A SURVEY OF PRESENT CONDITIONS

*Chas. A. Hanson*

*12/21/16*



# THE FUTURE OF JAPAN

WITH A SURVEY OF PRESENT  
CONDITIONS

BY

W. PETRIE WATSON

AUTHOR OF 'JAPAN : ASPECTS AND DESTINIES'



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*TO*

*MY FATHER AND MOTHER*



## PREFACE

It is perhaps difficult to state an adequate excuse for any addition to the literature that has been 'made' about Japan in recent years, and especially, of course, within the past year or two. A secondary excuse of every book is, however, its purpose, and with a statement of the purpose of the present volume the author leaves the question of a more adequate justification in abeyance. That purpose is mainly to render a psychological and philosophical account—or, perhaps, a broadly planned synthetic account—of historical and contemporary Japan, and to exhibit that degree of correlation which is to be discovered—or which, being discovered, may be usefully stated—between the phenomena of Japanese history and European, and between contemporary Japanese and European conditions.

The age is pre-eminently a psychological age, and the scrutiny of nations, of men, of phenomena, social and political, is mainly psychological. That historical method which is a display of facts, or a description of characters and events, sometimes seems almost an anachronism; that other method, which is an analysis of events and a criticism of characters, is no longer approved as it once was. We now seek to lay bare the soul of

history ; we desire to be introduced to the adytum of the temple of historical humanity ; we claim admission to the laboratory where the elements are compounded for the making of the men, the fostering of the ideas, the production of the events, that compose the frame, the reason, and the results of history. The psychological interest is now seen to be the dominating interest, because the soul of man is his greatest part, and the soul of history its most impressive and persuasive message.

A book aiming to disclose the psychological significance of modern Japan must of necessity leave on one side that Japan which is all colour and iridescence ; the Japan of cherry-groves transplanted from Paradise ; of gardens of the Hesperides ; of skies, sunsets, dawns, and high noons painted by Peris out of their memories of heaven ; that Japan which is a living picture when it is not a dead yet romantic past ; the Japan which should be, one thinks, a half-way house to the Islands of the Blest, on the long way thither from our prosaic England.

That other Japan knows nothing of psychology—happy country ! It seeks no ‘soul’ of history—abode of felicity ! It interrogates no phenomena—haven of innocence ! It appeals for pity to none of the great enigmas—calm and joyous retreat ! Pity indeed that we cannot have the vesture, the trappings, the romance, the gaiety, the music and the pomp of history without our realising—without our being compelled to realise—that it has also a soul whose immortal destiny must be a perpetual, undecaying skeleton, brooding upon our feast of history’s lovely and brave and stirring things !

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That other Japan—the Japan of colour and light and romance—can hardly, however, receive much notice in a book of the purpose of the present volume ; and the author leaves it on one side with the better conscience for that he has already, with a thousand others, made an attempt to appease its clamorous cry for ‘treatment.’

There is still another Japan—as it were, a third exposition or description of which the author, for sufficient reasons, as he thinks, does not allow to be very germane to the purpose of his book, or very pertinent to the ‘truth about Japan.’ This is the mystical, semi-esoteric Japan of Japanese and other expositors of the now famous Bushi-do code of the Samurai, and of the curious and always picturesque folklore of the people. Bushi-do as a code of conduct in an exigent national emergency is wholly admirable, as the world has lately seen. As a philosophy, or as a religion, it is foolishness. The folklore of Japan is more persistent and more interesting than that of any other civilised country ; but the general laws of Japanese progress and evolution cannot be discoverable in any lesson of Japanese demonology. The truth is that Japan is explicable on general principles, or on principles of reason, if at all. To find the soul of Japan in Bushi-do, to trace the springs of her being to its esotericism, is to affirm that nineteenth-twentieths of the people of the country have no soul, for Bushi-do was, or is, the code of but a twentieth part of the nation ; and as for the quaint and abundant folklore of the country, it is long since the scorn of

the class that rules the land. One must needs, therefore, retreat upon the necessity of general principles, if only because no great political fact, like Japan, can be the product either of an esotericism or of a folklore. It is necessary to bring Japan within the range, or within the operation, of the laws that govern the action of the human mind and of human genius in all ages and in every civilisation. If Japan be an exception to these laws, then she is not human but a devil.

I have, then, eschewed Japanese esotericism, because it is not sufficient. Besides, Japan contains quite a number of people—forty or forty-five millions—who would not understand esotericism either as an explanation of themselves or as a dictionary term. These are even ignorant of political principles. How, then, might they know mysticisms? In estimating a nation of forty-seven or forty-eight millions, it is necessary to be reasonable, if not ordinary. Curiosity and fancy may love to dwell—as why should they not?—upon their isolated superstitions, or upon their local theories of the occult; but their life and history, as a systematic whole, must be reasonable or it is nothing. The present author would propose that he has discovered Japanese history to be quite reasonable, and he has tried to exhibit the laws that attest its reasonableness. He pretends, that is, to prove that there is no need for the resort to esotericism, or to mysticism, for an ‘explanation’ of Japan. He cannot, indeed—and he does not—pretend to furnish a complete philosophy of Japan. The pretence would be monstrous. Europe does not yet

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understand her own history. Might she then presume to announce to Japan that she has discovered the master-key to hers? All that the author hopes might be allowed of the present volume is that it formulates, by a process of analysis and deduction, a basis for a clearer comprehension of Japan and Japanese history, in relation to Europe and European history, than has hitherto existed.

The scheme and intention of the book have led the author, he is ready to admit, into regions of speculative inquiry, where the traveller is apt easily to lose his way. Turn in what direction one may in the exhaustless steppes of these regions, a horizon, intangible yet real, inviting yet tantalising, ever presents itself to the anxious eye of the wanderer. An oasis here and there the present traveller hopes he has detected ; but mirage may often have deceived him. He would trust that his explorations have raised no dust of the desert to veil from other anxious eyes the eternal stars that brood upon the most lonely wastes, inviting the soul at least to hope that its unrest shall be appeased, its 'errors and wanderings' satisfied, in an ultimate haven of beatitude, which, though its substance be as remote from the paths of this our mortal journey as is the substance of the stars from our fleshly habitation, may yet 'project' for us a consolation as proximate and intimate as is the comfort of the light of the stars to him who is abroad in the darkness of the night.

The facts relating to conditions in the Japan of to-day, as given in the present volume, are, for the most

part, of the author's own observation and collection during a residence of some years in the country. Where he has quoted from authorities he has acknowledged his obligations. The purely historical data in the early chapters of the book are derived from the work or works of the great savants in 'things Japanese,'—Satow, Chamberlain, Aston, Brinkley, Griffis, Mason. To them the author offers the homage due to their achievements, and an apology for venturing to make, or attempting to make, philosophical bricks from historical straw of their providing. In acknowledgment of inspiration, if not of direct aid, received from his books, the author would presume also to lay a flower where many wreaths have lately been placed—on the tomb of the sad, the sweet, the suffering Lafcadio Hearn, supreme interpreter of that Japan which has passed like 'the glory that was Greece.'

The author wishes to intimate that Chap. XXIV. of this volume covers some of the ground surveyed from a different standpoint in an article written by him to the *Fortnightly Review*.

I take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to Mr. Peter Fraser, of Kobe, Japan, for many aids to me in my work, and for the unconscious but potent assistance of his abiding friendship. To Mr. A. W. Curtis, of the *Kobe Herald*, I tender a sincere if late acknowledgment of my debt to himself and to his journal.

W. PETRIE WATSON.



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## JAPAN AND EUROPE

It is a truism to say that we live in a remarkable time. An age of transition, it is sometimes named. In our hearts some of us fear, some of us hope, that it is an age of revolution. We live, as it seems, in a time of exhaustion—exhaustion of principles, exhaustion of personalities, exhaustion of speculations and philosophies, exhaustion almost of faith and hope. The pessimism of the age is matched by its unrest; its despair by its discontent; the abandon of its disorder by the passion of its desire. Have we not proved all political principles—conservatism, liberalism, democracy—and found them vain, if not deceitful? Do we not despair even of progress and her shibboleths?

In a sense it is a reaction from the great nineteenth century that overtakes us. That century, so great, so admirable in positive effort, has yet to be characterised psychologically. One is, perhaps, not very wide of the truth in naming it the century of hope, for the psychological basis of all effort is hope. It is true that pessimism was the prevailing mood of some of its greatest minds, but the hearts of the mass of men, the hearts of our fathers and grandfathers, were responsive to the mood of hope, and in this mood they raised a fabric of positive, political, industrial, and scientific achievement which we cannot refuse to admire.

But a reaction is upon us, and from the heights of hope—whence heaven is always in view—we seem to be brought down into the valley of the shadow of a strange incommunicable despair. Rightly to understand what this despair is, or what it means, it is necessary to know what were the hopes of the nineteenth century. For it is the disappointment of these

hopes that has plunged us in the abyss. Our fathers must have hoped too highly or too much, or it may even be that we begin to discover that they hoped for the impossible. It is hardly disputable (as it seems to the present writer) that the master motive of the nineteenth century, the spur of its immense effort, the inspiration of its purpose, was the hope of a material heaven, the hope of the creation of a political state, or of a social order, in which happiness, approximately universal, should be achieved by material means or through material agencies. This great hope, so significant of the nature of man, is preserved among us to-day in the ideals of Socialism, which invites us, by making property common, to make happiness general. But, in truth, we now know that the hope is illusory. The material heaven our fathers beheld is discovered to be a mirage, or at the best an oasis whose waters are bitter. Turn in what direction we may we now begin to understand that the hope of the great nineteenth century was doomed to disappointment because it was based upon illusion. The nineteenth century, from its magnificent effort, expected to realise political and social finality, which is but another name for the absolute,—for ever impossible in a partial and conditional world,—and the consciousness of the hopelessness of the great attempt of our fathers is part at least of our great disillusionment.

Whatever the ultimate psychological explanation of the pessimism of the time,—whether it be a despair following upon an era of unrealised, because unrealisable hopes, or the despair of what is sometimes spoken of as an ‘over-ripe civilisation,’—there is little difficulty in stating the characteristics of the age and its pessimism, or in ascertaining the attendant phenomena and their results.

It is an era of confusion and exhaustion—confusion of beliefs and exhaustion of principles. There is also, it is to be feared, a discovery of the vanity of philosophies, if not of the whole sum of human knowledge and the very organon of science itself.

Our most distressing anxiety is the confusion of beliefs, for this confusion seems to offer us a prospect of the collapse of the

crown, or, as one should perhaps say, of the decay of the foundation of the edifice of our society. The causes of this confusion are several. From one point of view the most salient—as those who follow us may see more clearly than we may, who look out from amid the confusion—was the introduction and the general adoption of the principle of toleration. How mysterious is the quality of History, how strange are its Nemeses! A great principle, inscribed on the banners of a hundred armies since the time of Luther, cherished and died for by a thousand martyrs, has brought us, it might seem, to the edge of chaos, because its efficacy has been exhausted in the very excess of its application. Having denied the right of tradition and authority, and affirmed the right of all men to hold what belief they choose, we have discovered that almost all of us are incapable of any belief save that which is offered us by some authority or by some tradition. The principle of toleration, born from the pains and the labour of the Reformation era, though its universal application was not, and could not have been, countenanced by the makers of that era, has at last, in the excess of its application, brought us to a situation in which we seem to contemplate the indefinite multiplication of forms of belief, issuing at length in a chaos of beliefs. We begin to discover that few of us after all are capable of standing by the principle of religious toleration when it invites us to the enormous task of creating a form of belief, or discovering an interpretation of life, for ourselves. Yet this is the task more and more forced upon the individual by the denial of the right of authority and the indefinite extension of the principle of toleration. The efficacy of the principle is lost in the multitude of the interpretations which it has authorised, and the one valuable truth which may be said to rise into prominence amid the increasing chaos is that humanity is unable to live without beliefs—in other words, without religion.

It is no doubt true that the more immediate cause of the disturbance of belief, with all the pains and penalties that accompany it, is to be found in the assault of criticism on tradition and authority. But in the perspective of events it is

already possible to perceive that the introduction of the principle of toleration was a necessary overture, an inevitable invitation, to the advance of the batteries of criticism with their destructive artillery. Licence of belief inevitably led to freedom of examination, and freedom of examination has led to attacks upon that fabric of dogma in which we have housed the sacred ark of religion. It is for the future rather than for the present to decide whether the fundamental difficulty of the situation occurs in the apparent impossibility of separating dogma from religion, or of defining and practising the latter apart from the former. What is now profoundly felt, if not clearly perceived, is that criticism following in the wake of toleration has so seriously shaken the fabric of dogma, hitherto identified with religion, that few can abide under its roof with the consciousness of that ample security which it offered to the minds of our fathers.

The religious confusion of the time is attended by phenomena which, lamentable as they are, may yet be regarded almost as results or manifestations of the confusion. Conscience—the conscience of classes and the conscience of individuals—is relaxed; individualism, more and more ignoring its obligations to God, more and more neglects its obligations to society; with the decay of a unifying—a common and universal—principle and image of religion, before which all men could bow, and by which all men could be disciplined, the fissures between the classes become wider; the wretchedness of unbelief—one should perhaps say the wretchedness of the impossibility of belief—is appeased by increasing doses of the anodyne of pleasure; the increasing disturbance of beliefs finds expression in increasing social unrest, and Christendom as a whole begins to discover an imperious necessity of religion, which, in the day of its ease and complaisance, it had never before suspected. It is a fact, honourable to itself but in truth of little assistance in soothing the deep heart of our distress, that the Church, as if conscious that its existence may be involved in the fate of its dogma, seeks to find a new justification, if not a new basis, by proclaiming and practising a social mission which not so long since might have

been deemed almost irreligious. As if discovering that dogma—the sanction of its existence hitherto—is no longer efficacious to save men's souls, it turns to the saving of their bodies by the assumption of a temporal ministry where in the past it has announced or claimed a purely spiritual office. The gaps left by the decay of the sanctions of faith it seeks to bridge by the acceptance of a new or enlarged mission of works. It would be foolish, however, to pretend that the religious confusions of the time can be mended by a transference of the Church's energies from the cure of our souls to the care of our bodies. An equitable distribution of the bread of this life, even if achieved through the instrumentality of the Church, will never satisfy the hunger of humanity—at any rate the humanity of Western Europe—for the bread of another; and even if the Church succeed in easing its own conscience by easing the lives of the poor, who lack even the bread of this life, men will still remain uneasily conscious that they cannot live by bread alone.

In face of a possible chaos of beliefs one asks if Japan, or the newly arisen East, represented by the 'apparition' of Japan, offers us any new and unifying concept of religion.

But if the era in the West be an era of confusion of beliefs, it is almost equally an era of disappointment in philosophy. Stupendous efforts, let us admit, have recently been made by philosophy, sometimes to supplant, sometimes to supplement, sometimes to sustain religion. Passing by its attempts to supplement and to sustain religion, it is certain that we discover a profound disappointment in it as a substitute for religion. The most successful, the most laborious, the most splendid of all the philosophical efforts of the nineteenth century,—that which offered evolution as an interpretation,—has done everything except satisfy the heart of man. So it may be said that it has done nothing. Our instinct of adoration, our need of hope, our aspiration towards the Infinite,—these remain, and evolution merely tantalises us with the assurance that they, and that we, are products of a process.

It is impossible, and it is perhaps unnecessary, here to tell the whole story of our disappointment in philosophy. Our grandfathers—at any rate our great-grandfathers—were able to

amuse themselves with philosophy because their hold upon religion was sure. To us philosophy becomes gall and bitterness because we perceive its inadequacy as a substitute for that religion—that concept of religion—which, from causes stated, no longer offers us security. Has Japan, has the newly arisen East, a philosophy to offer us ?

In the domain of politics the era is an era of exhaustion rather than of confusion—an era of exhaustion of principles. Of necessity there is a measure of reciprocity or sympathy as between the situation in religion and the situation in politics. It is impossible to dissociate the two ‘interests’ as spheres of human consciousness and activity. They are intimately linked, if not ultimately identical. Nevertheless, the critical phenomena in politics—the phenomena which authorise us to name the era in politics an era of exhaustion—may be discerned and stated even more decisively than the phenomena in religion.

It is an era of exhaustion of principles. One may illustrate this exhaustion by citation of the fate of the simple and once majestic principle of individual liberty. This is, perhaps, the readiest example of the cruel disappointment of the large hopes of the nineteenth century. Affirmed, with effusion of blood, in the time of Cromwell, this principle went into hibernation for a century or more. The birth, or the rebirth, of political philosophy, before the close of the slothful, sceptical, eighteenth century, brought it again into the light of day, and soon it was an emblazoned rubric of the liturgy of passionate political reformers from the thirties to the seventies of last century. Heaven was expected from the adoption and the operation of this majestic principle. Men said to their rulers, ‘Give us freedom, and soon we will make this tawdry earth a paradise for you and for ourselves ; we will sweeten the bitter cup of life with votes ; they will turn its bitterness to nectar.’ But what do we now know ? What do we now see ? Have we not been shocked by the recent discovery that individual liberty, as an inviolable principle, is impossible, since it leads but to the tyranny of the strongest ? Of old our rulers were rulers by divine right. To-day our rulers are rulers by human might, and we begin to suspect that the difference is not great. We

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begin to fear, indeed, that our last political state is worse than our first, or that the difference is merely the difference between one phrase and another. Our tyrants, instead of wielding a sword or a sceptre which they proclaim to be the gift of God, wield half a million, a million, or ten millions in gold, which they proclaim to be their gift to themselves under the operation of the majestic principle of individual liberty. And who shall say that they are wrong? If man is born free, if he is free by nature, who shall say that he is not free to make himself a tyrant—economic if not political? This majestic principle of individual liberty, while it may deny him the throne of a political tyrant, opens to him the path to an economic tyranny, and we begin to discover that the difference between an economic and a political tyranny is that while the latter could deny us votes the former is able to deny us bread. So the political heaven our fathers hoped for from their votes has vanished in the economic purgatory which has appeared from the operation of the majestic principle of individual liberty.

The truth is that even the principle of individual liberty is exhausted—its efficacy is exhausted—in the excess of its application. And may not the same be said of other great political principles of the past—the conservative principle, the liberal principle, the democratic principle? There remains, indeed, the communistic principle, as yet untried. Its adherents propose to make happiness general by making property common. They are ignorant, it seems, of the singular incapacity of mere possessions to confer the blessedness that ever is to be, but never is, for men. They refuse to take the lesson of the failure of the principles whose efficacy we have exhausted. But, in fact, the majority of us realise that community of property would mean at the utmost mere community, or general sufficiency, of that bread of this life upon whose single sustenance we know—were it only out of the bitterness of our experience—we cannot live.

The precariousness of the situation is evident enough. The decay of faith and the exhaustion of political principles threaten the stability of the institutions which have risen on the foundation of faith, or have been created as the embodiment

of political principles. The disappearance of the sanctions of faith threatens the existence of the Church ; the efficacy of the democratic principle being exhausted, Parliament, its embodiment, ceases to be respected. One resort is possible—the resort to personality. The examples of Cæsar, Cromwell, Napoleon, assure us that revolution itself always retreats on personality. Is it possible for personality to anticipate or prevent revolution? A personality of transcendent power offers itself as a substitute for faith—as did Napoleon ; but this was a man of a thousand years, or perhaps of all time, and even a Napoleon, out upon the sea by night, asks his officers of the staff, sceptical of God, ‘But who then, gentlemen, made these stars?’ In truth great personality, incapable of offering itself as a faith, must of needs retreat upon faith in the divine as its supreme sanction. Firm in this faith, relying upon definite or dogmatic representations of its truths, great personality is always possible as a stop-gap against revolution. So much one may expect and realise from the personality of a Gladstone, without whom—without whose firm or almost fanatic conviction of the truth and the reality of faith, it is probable that England might by now have been rocking in the throes of revolution. A personality which has neither a firm faith nor a great will offers the conclusions of its reason,—for ever inadequate, because reason can never pretend to the quality and prestige of the absolute possessed by faith or inherent in transcendent personality. As we have lately seen in the highest places in England, personality without firm faith and without transcendent force of character, retreating on reason, soon falls back on sophistry, which is but the impossible refinement of reason.

Having asked of Japan whether she has a new concept of religion, or a new philosophy, to offer us, we ask also whether she has a new principle in politics. Has she a new interpretation of life and the ultimate things, and a new theory of progress? To these questions this volume offers an answer. The answer, on the whole, is in the negative.

Japan offers two concepts of religion, both ultimately incapable of discharging the function, or taking the place, of

religion, either for Japan herself, or for us of Western Europe, living under the menace of a possible religious chaos. She offers us a religious nationalism,—loyalty conceived and practised virtually as a religion,—and a Buddhistic-Confucian concept of life and the cosmos which, modified or amplified by the ethics of the now celebrated Samurai code, serves sometimes to supplement, sometimes to take the place of her religious nationalism. The first concept—religious nationalism—is ultimately irreconcilable with the theory and practice of constitutional government; the second is incompatible with the hope, or with the fact, of progress, if any character and reality be allowed to that ‘result’ of history which passes under the name of progress. As Japan has adopted constitutional government, and as she has joined ‘the march of progress,’ she is destined to discover the impossibility of her present religious concepts even to herself.

Let it be admitted that the Buddhist concept of religion, even when modified by the materialism of Confucianism and the idealism, essentially military, of the Bushi-do code, possesses some of that quality of universality which is fundamentally necessary in all true religion,—which at any rate is necessary in an ultimate or absolute religion. It offers no concept of a supreme Being as a universal first cause, but it proposes an ultimate and universal destiny for mankind—absorption in the unconsciousness of infinity. It offers a theory of life—that it is, as it were, an incident or a stage in the progress towards the unconsciousness of infinity. It has no explanation of evil and suffering in the world, but it accepts them as facts comprehended in the larger and certainly indisputable fact of consciousness. Its ethic of universal benevolence is almost a corollary of its interpretation of life and its attendant sorrows. Its total or universal view—its religious concept and precept, in fact—might be summed up in the simple statement of life as an evil to be mitigated by the practice of mutual benevolence among men, and the repression of all desire withholding, or tending to withhold, men from the attainment of the goal of absorption in the infinite. How totally differentiated this view of life and the cosmos, of the

particular and universal destiny, is from the view offered by Christianity need hardly be stated. It is sufficient here to observe that the one view—that of Christianity—proposes to men the discharge or fulfilment of individual responsibility—responsibility to faculty, and through faculty to a Supreme Being, the author of faculty. And hope—visualised or almost materialised in ‘faith’—for the immediate and the infinite future is the reward, or the anticipation of the reward, of the discharge of this responsibility. The other view, that of Buddhism, proposes disengagement from responsibility by repression of desire, or the endurance of life without hope, save the hope of absorption in the unconscious infinite. Under the ægis of the one view, the view presented by Christianity, ‘progress’ is always possible and has been achieved in Europe; under the ægis of the other, progress is scarcely possible, and has not been achieved in Asia, as it was scarcely achieved in Japan until she came into adequate contact with the progressive West. The one view is pessimistic, the other is optimistic. Hope, or faith, being the psychological basis of all effort, effort has been the characteristic of Christian civilisation. Without hope men have no incentive to effort, and in Asia, including Japan up to forty years since, effort has been stifled, as it were in the hour of its birth, by that negation of hope, the Buddhist conception of the ultimate things.

Japan, then, in the Buddhist presentment of religion, has no new unifying concept to offer to Western civilisation, distressed by the chaos into which its beliefs, the expressions of its hope in the ultimate things, threaten to fall. Adoption of the Buddhist presentment of religion is impossible to Europe unless Europe is prepared to look upon ‘progress’ as an unreal, unsubstantial nothing—unless, that is to say, Europe is willing to turn her back upon her past. There is, however, the case of Japan. It is the writer’s view that she also is destined to discover the impossibility of the Buddhist concept of religion before she has gone far in ‘the march of progress.’ In the present volume it is shown that modern Japan is the achievement, not of a nation, but of a group of national leaders who continue, at this time, to

represent and embody the movement. This group of leaders, nurtured in a stoic acceptance of the Buddhistic-Confucian view of life, and at heart pessimists, have been inspired by religious nationalism and a personal and patriotic ambition—sometimes by mere mutual rivalry—to undertake the great effort, purely practical and materialist, which has made modern Japan; but can they inspire a nation of forty-eight or fifty millions to continue in the path of this effort on the support of a religion which denies them hope? It is always possible, even for ordinary characters, to be virtuous without hope. It is never possible for a people to make sacrifices—in other words to undertake great effort—without an objective; that is, without hope. A religious view of life which offers no goal, no consummation, save the attainment of nothingness, though strong individual minds may be able to accept it, cannot reconcile the mind of a people to the immense sacrifices and the great intellectual and physical efforts that alone make material progress possible. It is sufficiently significant that in Europe to-day the partial decay of the sanctions of faith leads men to ask whether material progress be a real gain to humanity or a mere intellectual and economic burden which, without faith, may ultimately become intolerable.

There is, again, Japan's religious nationalism—patriotism assuming some of the character, and discharging some of the functions of a religion. It 'materialises' mainly in the concept of the quasi-divinity of the head of the State, and in the practice of ancestor-worship. Is there here any religious idea, any concept of religion, to which the distracted West might turn its aching eyes? The question scarcely requires an answer. We look for the universal, Japan here offers us the particular. We seek that which is greater than fatherland—that which is enthroned over every kingdom,—and Japan bids us bow before the image of country. We are long since done with the divine right, and it is not probable that we shall find salvation in a new apotheosis of kings. The concluding chapters of this volume display sufficient reasons, the writer thinks, for a proposition, if not for a prophecy, that Japan herself will discover the inadequacy of her 'trust in princes' as a

religious faith. If in the stress of 'progress'—the intellectual stress of the achievement of 'progress'—she must discover, as she will discover, the impossibility of the 'intellectual resignation' of Buddhism—clearly impossible under a concept of life or of 'progress,' which by its very nature demands intellectual activity—she is likewise destined to find that the autocracy, to say nothing of the divinity, of rulers is first menaced and afterwards destroyed by the principle of constitutional government.<sup>1</sup>

We return to the position of Europe and of Japan *vis-à-vis* Christianity—traditional, dogmatic Christianity. If, through the decay of the sanctions of dogma, Europe is moving towards a chaos of beliefs, it is almost equally clear that in joining the 'march of progress' Japan is moving towards an era of perplexity which must conduct her into the very dilemmas that constitute the crisis of our own disjointed time.

Meanwhile, however, there is the significant conjuncture of two enormous events—the conquest or the acceptance by Japan of a place in the 'comity' of the civilised or progressive nations, and the apparent decay of the fabric of religious dogma upon which the civilisation or progress of Europe ultimately reposes. In whatever light we, in these times of sorrowful disillusionment, begin to view progress, so-called, it seems certain that it has been achieved solely or mainly by aid of the leverage which Christianity as a system of dogma offered to our fathers in their efforts to attain that great future which is, or should be, ours. So much is proved by the case of Japan set forth in its abstract aspect in the second part of this volume. Viewing the concrete facts, we find that up to a certain epoch there is a general and altogether remarkable identity of evolutionary process in the history of Japan and Europe—Western Europe more especially. In every salient particular the feudal polity of mediæval Japan—that is, of the Japan that disappeared with the 'opening' of the country fifty years ago—was the feudal polity of mediæval England, France,

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<sup>1</sup> It is self-evident also that religious nationalism has nothing of the quality of universality necessary in a religion of humanity. The Japanese, great though they may be, cannot well ask us, or the Chinese, to accept their Emperor as God.

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and Germany. The sovereign in Japan, as in Europe, was the chief of a turbulent, semi-independent baronage, rather than the free and independent ruler of the country, or the head of an organised national polity. The people had little or no direct contact or correspondence with the sovereign. Rather were they, in Japan as in Europe, part of the entourage of the 'feudal' chiefs if they were settled on the land, and members of industrial corporations and guilds if they dwelt in the cities. But there was one remarkable difference between Japan and the states of Western Europe at this epoch—a difference out of which arose the essential causes of the so-called progress of civilisation in the European states and of its absolute arrest in Japan. In the European states the sovereign's prerogative was for long protected by the doctrine of divine right; in Japan the sovereign, the Mikado, was himself divine. In Europe there was always a higher authority than the sovereign—the authority of God, represented by dogmatic Christianity. In Japan the Mikado was a god, or even, it might be said, the god of the people. The doctrine of divine right was challenged in Europe—first in England, afterwards in France,—because the peoples were able to discern, as they were inevitably fated to discern, in the Supreme Being of Christianity a higher authority than that of any human sovereign. In other words, Christianity's affirmation of the equality of all men in the sight of God overthrew, first the feudal system, and afterwards divine right; and Christianity thus became the parent, or at least the foster-parent, of every subsequent development, political and intellectual, if not also artistic, of the civilisation of Europe. The evolution of Japanese civilisation is very different under the ægis of a different concept of the divine. In the sixteenth century the form and order of the feudal polities of Japan and of England were generally identical. In England, however, organised dogmatic Christianity represented the authority of God, whereas in Japan the only god was a human Mikado with divine attributes. The close of the sixteenth century and the opening of the seventeenth witnessed a great political convulsion in Japan and in England. In each case it was a convulsion involving

the fate of the doctrine of divine right. Two men of curiously parallel genius emerged from this convulsion, Oliver Cromwell in England and Tokugawa Iyeyasu in Japan. Cromwell, professing himself conscious, as undoubtedly he was conscious, of the authority of God for his acts, challenged and overthrew the divine right, and, ambitious because he was human, himself took possession of the supreme political power. But it was impossible that this power could be secure to him or permanent in his family. The same sublime authority which he had invoked, the authority of Christianity, proclaiming the equality of all men in the sight of God, always inspired some of his contemporaries to attempt, as it enabled those who came after him to achieve, the overthrow of his own and of every subsequent despotism, and thereby also to promote the 'freedom' of the human mind and the 'progress' of civilisation. In Japan, however, Tokugawa Iyeyasu, having possessed himself of the supreme power in the state, was able not only to make himself secure in its possession, but to hand it down in the form of a rigid despotism to his heirs as its possessors for ten generations. And this he was able to do primarily because there was no definite, dogmatic, religious authority, proclaiming the equality of all men in the sight of God, to oppose his purpose. The Mikado and the Mikado's family he recognised as divine, but the people never saw the Mikado, and in any event the latter could never become to the Japanese that which Christianity was to England in the time of Cromwell, that which indeed it always hitherto has been to Europe—a transcendent and supreme if invisible authority, imaged in definite, infallible, and imperative religious dogma. Tokugawa Iyeyasu was able to arrest the political and intellectual progress of Japan by constituting a despotism possible only in the absence of the dogmatic religious authority of Christianity, or of Christianity's concept of God.

Japan offers to Europe, perplexed and confused by the variety of its religious and philosophical interpretations of life, and by the exhaustion of its political principles, none of the guidance of a new interpretation, no hope of a new political principle. But Japanese history, the process of that history, throws an interesting and important light on the process of the history



of Europe in its highest relationship—the relationship to religion.

From Japan, from Japanese history, we discover that whatever may be the latter state of our Christianity of dogma and of authority, this Christianity was necessary to the attainment of our present position. The votary of progress and civilisation, the votary of the principles that underlie our progress and civilisation, is assured, or compelled to admit, by the evidence of the history of Japan, that without Christianity no European progress or civilisation would have been possible. Unchallenged by the definite and imperative authority of a dogmatic religion, our political tyrants would have been able to effect that which the political tyrants of Japan effected—the permanent intellectual servitude, and the permanent political bondage, of their peoples. Without the inspiration of the infinite measure of man's destiny presented by Christianity, without the incitement of a loyalty to an authority transcending all political and temporal authority, the peoples of Europe must have continued to be the passive prey of a feudalistic despotism such as denied the Japanese people all opportunity of expressing their native genius down the whole range of their history, until they were brought in contact with a civilisation which is the product of the liberating power of a religious idea, beside which every political authority is mean and small, and under the shadow of which no political tyranny can permanently abide.

So much the history of Japan teaches; so curiously and vividly does it demonstrate the 'necessity' of Christianity in European history. Yet Japan offers nothing that can assuage the difficulties of Europe, mired in a chaos of interpretations of that authority by virtue of which she is what she is, and confused by the exhaustion of the political principles which have been brought into being under the protection of that authority.

The sanctions of dogma are at least seriously assailed, and we in Europe find ourselves approaching, as it seems, a chaos of dogma at the very time of Japan's entrance upon that 'march of progress' which would seem to be possible—since, in the past, it has been possible—only under the standards of

dogma! Japan has no new unifying concept of religion to offer us, and those concepts of religion—pessimistic Buddhism and religious nationalism—which she does profess, must ultimately prove impossible to herself, and yet it seems that all the progress, all the achievement, of that Western civilisation to which Japan has been indebted for her very preservation, has been possible only under the banner, or under the protection, of a dogmatic concept of religion! We are, it seems, face to face with a unique demonstration of the truth and reality of paradox, and with a new proof of the presence or immanence in history of that principle of contradiction which Hellenic thought sometimes presented as the profoundest truth of life, and which some highly accredited modern philosophy has offered as the only truth which the unaided intellect of man can isolate.

After Christianity—after dogmatic Christianity—there is, however, Christ and the necessity of religion. Is Europe to abandon Christ, can Japan ignore Him? Can Europe and Japan—Europe and the East—attempt the future without religion? Some attempt is made to answer these momentous questions in the latter part of this volume.

Meanwhile, if we cannot expect from Japan a new concept of religion—universal in character and unifying in effect—it is even more clear that she has no philosophy to offer us and no new political principle. The poverty of her philosophical achievement, and the limitations of her philosophical explanations, are shown in this volume. This poverty and these limitations might, indeed, be presumed from the indisputable deficiency of the Japanese mind in range of imagination. That she has no political principle to which we might look for rescue from the exhaustion of principles which already is akin to a paralysis of our progress, so-called, might be argued from the one fact that she has adopted the constitutional or democratic principle—in other words, the principle of individualism or individual freedom—the doom of whose efficacy seems already pronounced among us by the economic tyrannies which the excess of its application has made possible. Japan, indeed, furnishes to Europe a remarkable demonstration of the

possibilities of administrative efficiency ; but efficiency is not a political principle. At the most it is but method or order—a first or elementary condition of all organised or individual activity. In political principles, as in concepts of religion and philosophies, Japan has nothing new to put before us.

Japan, in fact, to Europe is but a note in the great diapason of history ; she is not that diapason, nor is she even a chord. For Europe she is not the apparition of a great new saving principle. Her singularity is the time, the epoch, of her emergence on the world's stage ; her unique characteristic is that her soldiers—the majority of them—are brave to die without hope—at any rate without the Christian hope. Yet she is destined to find that it is perhaps easier to die than to live the life of 'progress' and Western 'civilisation' without hope.

If she offers Europe a lesson, it is a lesson which, in the very act of adopting European civilisation, she is herself unlearning—the lesson of simplicity, psychical, intellectual, political. This simplicity is pre-eminently necessary if men should propose, as Japan at present proposes, to ignore religion, and more especially the great, unifying, sustaining idea of a Supreme Being, under which alone that European civilisation which Japan has adopted has been possible. And here, perhaps,—in the very impossibility of men ignoring religion,—is where the necessity of Christ—as apart from dogmatic Christianity—is destined to emerge, to the eyes of Japan as to the eyes of Europe, the supreme or master fact of history. It seems as if Japan were the destined herald of an epoch of immeasurable confusion, from which, as it shall demonstrate the futility of all our so-called progress, the emptiness of civilisation, and the impossibility of all political solutions of our difficulties, humanity shall emerge, humbled, if not broken, to recognise their last hope in the Founder of Christianity, and to discover in the promise of His return their only consolation in the midst of woes that are inevitable because evil is ineradicable, and the realisation of that finality, that ideal, that absolute, which is acclaimed in all true religion, and imaged in all great poetry, for ever a vain dream on earth.



PART I  
CONDITIONS OF THE TIME



# I

## THE UNIQUE JAPAN

THE Japan of to-day surprises the imagination. Contrary to all experience, disappointing every anticipation, it is a nice question if the liveliest fancy of the past could have been equal to an airy dream of this warlike Utopia. It is even possible that in the sober, critical epochs of the remoter future the Japan of to-day shall cease to be asserted or believed as an historical fact. In the orderly evolution of our reasonable and reasoning age it may be that men shall come to honour and love Japan upon the sole fact of her having been the last refuge and repository of the regretted secret of the unusual, the extraordinary, the original, the phenomenal! In the Japan of to-day, when she is part of that Antiquity which 'was when it was not,' the future may behold the last conservator of the interesting, the final contender for the picturesque things. There is even a peradventure—and this is a serious thing—that Japan may live in history as the last priestess of the cult of practisers of the true art of living, believers in the graces of life, upholders of the theory of beauty in the midst of commonness.

Japan surprises the imagination. Yet truly she is also common. One comes to find that it is only upon

reflection that Japan is extraordinary. At first the country is quaint and fantastic, almost unique. In the second stage it appears to be almost like the rest of the world. Then upon the large canvas of history—the present, the past, and the future—Japan resumes her mantle of motley. The truth is that her manners are completely different—the first stage; her human nature the same—the second; her experiment bizarre, incongruous, fantastical, without precedent—the third stage. She is first an amusing creature; then she is a woman; then she is a prophetess. She is first an antique masque; then she is an ordinary drama of to-day; then she is a vision of the world's future. She is the Queen of Sheba; the Magdalen of the Gospels; the Bride of the Apocalypse. Are there not three verdicts upon Japan—that of the enchanted visitor; that of the resident and disenchanting foreigner; that of the puzzled philosopher who asks how a nation has succeeded in jumping out of its skin?

Well, one is first enchanted. This, of course, is long since notorious. A thousand volumes have been given to the Japan that enchants. The portrait of the fairy Japan has been painted by innumerable hands, and a few precious, ingenious, original fancies. The Japan of disenchantment is less famous. Disappointment, in an age of decaying manners, is still happily inclined to reticence. We do not tell the lady that she is ill-favoured and a bore. It is the Japan that is historically unique of which we know least—of which least has been said or written.

Landing at Yokohama you do not think of your having dropped upon the stage of one of the greatest experiments in history. You breathe no heroic atmosphere on the Bund at Yokohama; there is nothing in



the streets of the city, however quaint they may be, that seems instinct with the consciousness of extraordinary destinies ; no face of things obviously adorned with the halo of a unique past ; none obviously stamped with the image of a missionary future. It is necessary to have one's baggage 'passed' by a customs officer with very homely features and of quite an inferior rank—why else is the bottom of his trousers vandyked ?—who scrawls an ugly, inartistic chalk-mark on one's several portmanteaux. One may even have to go in search of portorage for the baggage—most commonplace of missions—in the very gate of this real or imagined land of enchantments, and it is not a noble Greek with moulded limbs and a brow of great enterprises that one finds when one finds it.

In the stress of these petty crises it is not likely that you should think the great thought which, nevertheless, is in the Japanese air—the thought which it is proper for history to think of Japan—the tribute of fancy, of reflection, of contemplation, which it is necessary to offer to her past, her present, and her future. For, after all, it is true that this land is the stage of an experiment of a kind, and of a magnitude, and of an importance, of which no previous age has record. This is true even if, soon after your first enchantments, you perceive that all persons and things in Japan fulfil a daily purpose which is too appropriate to be romantic, and wear an aspect which is ordinary so soon as it has ceased to be quaint. The Japan of to-day, even if there be a long story to tell of its public paradoxes, does not wear on its street fronts any plain hint of an unimaginable future or an incredible past. Even of Japan it is true that the phenomenal is clear only in the perspective of an epoch, in the bird's-eye view of a century. When accidental paradox and unconscious incongruity have lost their

piquancy by usage, your day in Japan comes to be quite ordinary like your day in London or in New York. There is nothing really exciting in Japan—in the Japanese drama—save the action, the quickness of the historical movement. And even so, the progress of the evolutionary process is not so fast as to permit of your being entertained by the spectacle of a radical modification of types in the course of a single day. This is why Japan comes to be quite ordinary to the unphilosophic, unhistorical foreign resident. This is why he or she soon sees her quite unlike, quite beneath her fame. One should not expect the drama of all history to unroll in a single afternoon even on the Japanese stage. What is necessary is to realise the wonder of her having compressed its action into the time of a single generation. One does not learn this wonder from the streets of Yokohama, which, when they no longer amuse, are very ugly, rather dirty, and always resonant with Japanese noise, which is seldom beautiful.

In fact, the Japan which is the theatre of an experiment that is historically unique is not the Japan of to-day, but rather, as it were, the Japan of yesterday, of to-day, and of to-morrow—the Japan of the past and the future as well as the Japan of the present. The truly profound interest of this country is not to be found in the curious aspects of its cities or in the exquisite vistas of its pine-clad shores; and though it be desirable to see the Japan of to-day, or, so far as this is possible, to make it to be seen, it is certain that merely to have seen it is neither fully to know it nor fully to understand it. The Japan of to-day is an ephemeral phantasy; a variation upon a theme of a depth and width not easily conceivable; a symbolical figure on the ground of a great picture which the painters may take

a century to complete. Thus, it is only as a clue, or mayhap as a key—a clue to a future of infinite possibility, a key to an historical situation of infinite curiosity and perhaps of infinite complexity—that the Japan of to-day is important. The Japan that you may see to-day if you go thither is the Japan of an extraordinary experiment which as yet is in an inchoate, preliminary stage. Its most apparent result at its present stage is paradox and unconscious incongruity; but we of Europe, if we must laugh, should as well perceive that our amusement is not very truly apposite, because the Japan that amuses—the Japan of to-day—is not itself very apposite. Only final results can be regarded as truly pertinent, and it is certain that hardly at any point, scarcely in any particular, has the Japanese experiment yet given a final result. Not in politics, not in religion, not in ethics, not in social practice, not in art, not in industry or in commerce, not in modes of thought or in rules of convention, has the experiment yielded any final formula or fulfilled a predetermined purpose. In the art of war alone may the new Japan be said to have achieved a destiny and clinched an argument.

What one sees in the Japan of to-day is a new structure, a new polity, a new state, in process of erection upon the site of an old which has not been wholly removed. The foundations of the old are strong, its walls massive, and its style, though it be that of a bygone age, not unpleasing. The character of the extraordinary enterprise, and the methods of the men in charge of it, must inevitably compose an incongruous spectacle. The order of the old and the order of the new, each in itself coherent, are only with great difficulty contrived into a mutual and consistent harmony. New roofs are imposed upon old walls,

wings entirely new are thrown out upon the right and left of the body of the old edifice, pediments are placed over gables, porches where there are no doors, a cupola for a bastion, a lancet window for a hole in the wall. Inevitably there is some chaos and unconscious burlesque of the style and the order of the two civilisations which are the quarries of the builders. The design, however, is evident, and the diligence and ardour of the builders plain to be seen.

You cannot perceive, that is to say, the significance of the Japanese experiment upon landing at Yokohama. The Japan of to-day is not the plot of the drama, but only a clue to it. Japan to the fleshly eye quickly becomes ordinary; to some senses it is almost immediately repugnant. The chalk-marks on your portmanteaux have no mystical import or spiritual meaning; the bottom of the examining officer's trousers are vandyked by wear and tear; your porter's physical frame has mostly gone to his shoulders because the Japanese social stress has put him to portorage for a living. The immediate and the particular are soon commonplace even here. It is the Japanese universal that is wonderful. And the Japanese whimsical is neither particular nor universal, but merely accidental.

And, as I have hinted, even the Japanese whimsical is not, after all, so very whimsical. The things that are done differently in Japan have been many times told. It is perhaps a greater wonder that there should be so much in Japanese modes and manners to vouch our common ancestry. We might, for instance, expect a Night-People, a race whose energies should expand most naturally under the radiance of the moon or the nightly stars, a race the crown of whose working day should be the keystone hour of the night. Or why

not a subterranean people, a race who should esteem the fair face of the earth too beautiful to soil with the dust and the dirt of their noisome tasks ; a people who should reserve their fields for holidaying and their hills for altars to their gods? But the Japanese are rather like ourselves. They spew their cities upon the plain by the river's brink, or upon the seashore ; they labour under the eye of day ; the moon, as with us, is their poets' enchantress, and night their due season of dreams.

It is hard, it seems, to be truly original. In Japanese streets you shall see much that is like Clerkenwell or the Bowery or the Paris faubourg. There are morning crowds, noonday crowds, evening crowds, as with us. You may see the prototypes of a dozen street apparitions which you may have supposed to be strictly characteristic of the West. There is the morning fish-vendor here crying live eels in tubs swung to a fore-and-aft yoke like the Chinaman's on the tea-caddies. If the eel-vendor's price be high to-day the prudent Japanese housewife will scorn him to reason like the prudent housewife of Camberwell. Upon the fish-dealer's heels there is the schoolboy, with his 'shining face,' curious as to the live eels, advantaging himself of the dealer's delay with the prudent housewife to look at the eels with his mouth. A loud-voiced drayman comes after. Here, however, he is himself between the shafts, and the dray is long and narrow. But, clearly enough, it is the dray and he the drayman. Follows, at the tail of the dray, a clerk, or 'something,' pale, spectacled, clean-shaven, respectable, seeing no eels or other strange things in his daily way to his daily books. Him you might know also, though almost always nowadays he walks under

a strange, wild, un-Japanese billycock. After him a hurly-burly of jinrikisha, scaring that plump sister of the muse of laughter, the Japanese maid-servant, out upon an early purchase from the family baker or greengrocer, like her aproned prototype t'other side of the globe, in Camberwell. Your priest also, servitor of the supernatural, representative of the things that are unseen, you shall have, of a proper gravity, clothed in a proper black, with the hollow cheek of asceticism or the rotund belly of the well-living friar, of a meek eye or a merry mouth, common and unheeded of the street, like your own, yet on fit occasion beheld with a fit reverence. These and more of the human specialties of your own streets are in the Japanese street, and always there is the great procession of the average—the nondescripts and the inscrutables who are the substance of the foil of humanity, in the midst of which peculiarity, character, and eccentricity gleam with a sparkling light, the light of the exceptional and the interesting.

There are shops which, though without fronts, are repositories of articles for sale at stated prices, by the yard, by the pound, by the score. The categories are those of Camberwell and the Bowery and the Faubourg St. Germain. The grocer is a grocer, the clogmaker trades with your feet, the hatmaker caters for your head. The haberdasher does not sell fish with his linens and woollens, and the charcoal-dealer does not trade in jewellery. It is curious, when one thinks of it, that there should be so much sameness.

The order of life has variations; the theme is the same. There is really nothing new under the Japanese sun, save perhaps the manner in which the same old things are done. They are perhaps a nation

of early risers, but they begin their day in the morning as we do. Perhaps they do not take life so seriously, but in ordinary circumstances men labour with the sweat of their brows or the heat of their brains as we do, and their women are given in marriage and they bear children. The resemblances are not merely superficial. Everywhere you may perceive signs of the dominion of the same masterful law that rules the goings out and the comings in of men in cities and in provinces on the other side of the world. Could one peer into the Japanese soul one might feel, I think, the awe of a universal Presence, whose empire, as it is eternal, is also all-pervading. Death is sorrowful in Japan; shame hangs her head; almost the same things are shameful; infamy is infamy. In Japanese streets you will see mothers with a happy light, as of their motherhood, in their eyes; children with the innocence of heaven in their faces; rogues with the furtive eyes of cunning; men bent with the weight of life; fools unconscious of it. They all wear another garb than ours; their public and private manner is different, and their conventions are their own. Otherwise they are humanity, like the rest of us: splendid blunderers, angels and devils. They are, at bottom, the Japan which is ordinary; the Japan of the disenchantment that follows the enchantment; the Japan that is human and of like passions with ourselves—gay and sorrowful, fortunate and unfortunate, sublime and sordid, strong and feeble.

It is their modern adventure that is truly unique; not so much the Japanese, their country, or even their manners. Japan fascinates because she challenges, or seems to challenge, the history and the evolution of Europe—the principles of that history and the laws of that evolution.

## II

### THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

JAPANESE history of pre-modern eras—up to the abolition, that is to say, of feudal institutions and the adoption of western ideas thirty years ago—is a record, just as European history is a record, of the rise, of the rule, and of the decay of forces originating positively in the genius of individuals, or negatively from the needs and habits and weaknesses of masses of individuals. There is nothing eccentric, absurd, or even unusual in Japanese history until it becomes the history of European reason transferred to Japan. Japan, so to speak, was quite reasonable until she adopted reason. It was when she began to refer to Europe for precedents and examples that she became least like Europe. Until then she had been as we were in our time ; afterwards she became, as she even yet is, like as we have never been. Japanese history of pre-modern times was orderly, impressive, romantic, or mean, even as the history of European States has been orderly, impressive, romantic, and mean. There are peculiarities only of detail ; the general sense, the deeper meaning, are the same in Japanese history and in European. The Japan of to-day in truth belies her own story, her own life. Her present is in a sense a lie to her past, which is no



more or no less extraordinary than the past of other states and other peoples.

There are three well-defined periods of authentic Japanese history before the opening of the purely modern era. And there is a period of mingled myth, legend, and tradition, important only because from it projects even into the blazing light of the latest day of the modern era an image of the Emperor's divinity before which the masses of the people now, as always, prostrate themselves in thought, if not in fact. The mythical period extends to about 600 A.D., illumined, as it approaches that date, by increasing rays of probability, and finally merging with the first period of authentic history, when the testimony of contemporary records begins.

There is no very original quality in Japanese mythology. It is as immoral as that of Greece, with little of the grace and beauty that adorn the latter. An age of gods is postulated. A pair of them, Izanagi and Izanami, brother and sister, bring the islands of Japan into existence from their incestuous union. Izanami, the female, dies. Then from the left eye of Izanagi is born Ama-Terasu, goddess of the sun, or of day, and from his nose Susa-no, an 'impetuous male deity.' Some banal and unlovely episodes ensue which do not possess even an excusing aspect of homogeneity. Ama-Terasu had received from Izanagi a third share of the dominion of the universe. Failure of legitimate issue, or other accident to the remaining members of the cosmic triumvirate, secures to her an undivided empire. She decides to devolve the sovereignty of Japan upon a divine child whose parentage seems to be a question between her and her erratic brother the 'impetuous male deity,' who has in the

meanwhile visited Hades and other places. Finally, it is the child of this child, the grandson, that is to say, of Ama-Terasu, herself the daughter of the left eye of Izanagi, who was the son of many gods, who themselves were the children of supposition or at best of allegory—the grandchild of Ama-Terasu becomes the first Mikado or Emperor of Japan, Jimmu Tenno, the anniversary of the day of whose accession, 11th February of 660 B.C., is an official holiday in the Japan of to-day. The same anniversary was chosen for the promulgation of the Constitution of 1889. Japan's modern era has thus been linked with her mythological age by the delicate artfulness of the modern *régime*. How can the people cease to respect the divine title of a Mikado who has given them a national holiday, whose reign, moreover, even if it scarcely emerge as a fact from the phantom records of 660 B.C., is chronologically associated with the inauguration of their charter of liberties ?

Opening in the seventh century A.D., the first period of authentic history covers the five succeeding centuries. This was a period of centralised or quasi-centralised government, in which the Emperors, for a time at least, wielded, in fact, those powers of State of which in theory they have always been the true repositories. In the first decades of this period Buddhism had already acquired a foothold in Japan ; and with it, in its wake or under its wing, came the invisible forces of Chinese civilisation. It is Japan's unique fame never to have been successfully invaded by a material enemy. She has been repeatedly conquered by alien ideas. Her first surrender was to the united, or at least nearly contemporary, armadas of Buddhism and Confucianism. The former more than divided the spiritual jurisdiction of the country with Shintoism, the indigenous cult

whose gods were and are the legion members of the pantheon of mythology. Confucianism acquired extensive temporal authority: the polity of the period was moulded upon its maxims. First at Nara, afterwards at Kyoto, the Emperors of this period presided over a court which was preternaturally brilliant and preternaturally wicked. In the pictures which the classical literature of Japan has preserved of this court the western student recognises with some astonishment, not unmingled with admiration, a Charles II. hunting the moth, a Louis XV. toying with a de Pompadour, or even an Oriental Frederick arguing a question of literary taste with an Oriental Voltaire. While the old Roman system was dying of effeminacy at Byzantium, a Japanese system, of extraordinary destinies, was already, in its childhood, threatened with asphyxiation in a vicious yet delightful atmosphere of poetic feminism. This period gave birth to Japanese literature, Japanese art, and to one form of the Japanese drama. It was also, as has been said, a period of centralised government: the framers of the Constitution of 1889 refer mainly to the precedents of this period for justification of the Constitution's theoretical reservation of the Emperor's absolutism. The Japanese people of the period we commonly see only as semi-serfs, liable to one month's *corvée* in every twelve, heavily taxed, groaning under the burden of a communal responsibility for crime, for debt, or body service. And throughout the period the power of the military class gradually acquired indispensable sanctions, the prelude to its subsequent claim to prerogatives in the nature of the case indisputable. Great military chiefs who waged successful war against the savage aborigines—there is a remnant of these, the hairy Ainos, in northern Japan

down to the present hour—founded great provincial families which soon claimed the prestige and authority of provincial *régimes*, scarcely acknowledging the overlordship of a feminist court in Kyoto. In the court itself the real power passed from the hands of the Emperors into those of the Fujiwara family, whose founder had established himself in an important place near the throne by assisting the consolidation of the imperial authority upon a foundation of Confucian principles. Afterwards two purely military families, the Taira and the Minamoto, contended for the place which, in their decadence and decay, the Fujiwara left vacant. This struggle brought confusion upon the institutions of the country, and civil war into every province.

The Minamoto and a feudalised polity finally emerged from the dust and the blood amid which the sun of the first period of authentic Japanese history sank to its setting in the twelfth century. The Minamoto, in the person of Yoritomo, one of Japan's commanding historical figures, founded the Shogunate in 1190, and inaugurated a period which, as the Shogunate survived into the modern era, and disappeared only with the resignation of the fifteenth Tokugawa Shogun in 1868, might be regarded from the historical point of view as an appropriate and characteristic division, covering the immense interval from the twelfth century to modern times. Yet the Shogunate of the centuries up to 1600, and the Shogunate of the Tokugawa family, which wielded its powers from 1603 to 1868, connote two epochs of political method and political order, of manners, art, literature, and progress, so clearly differentiated that the historian of Japan, or the student of her history,

instinctively observes that if artificial divisions are in any way or anywhere justified or appropriate in a historical method, the opening of the seventeenth century should of a surety announce the close of one epoch and the beginning of another in the history of Japan. The two greatest men of Japan stand in the breach between the second historical period, 1190-1600, and the third, 1603-1868. They contended, as it were in the very pit of the breach between the two periods, for the right to impress the image of their genius upon the Japanese State and people of the third period. One of them, perhaps the greater, failed; the other duly stamped an image of his genius on the political and social character of the Japan of the third period; and this image only disappeared under blows from the hammer of an alien civilisation—that of Europe itself—in the sixth and seventh decades of the nineteenth century.

To the centralised political system of the first period, with its brilliant, literary, effeminate court, there had succeeded the dual sovereignty of Emperor and Shogun, and a feudalised polity whose character in truth forbids the award of the name of sovereign to Emperor or to Shogun; for every feudal baron was a prince within the boundaries of his fief, and every fief was a principality in its relations with its neighbours.

The foundation of the Shogunate in the twelfth century was nothing less, however, than the foundation of a second political sovereignty. The title, from signifying no more than the status and function of a generalissimo, soon described the actual ruler, who, for his critical acts, might ask the seal of an Emperor incapable of withholding it if he wished. A second

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capital was founded at Kamakura, near the modern Yokohama, with a rival court, governed as to its pleasures and pursuits by the severe and simple code of the military class from which its entourage was drawn. In Kyoto the Emperor supported a faded splendour—chiefly, indeed, a ceremonial splendour—upon an allowance and the complaisance of his masters, the women and elders, who regularly deposed him before he came to vigorous and protesting manhood. With exceptional intervals, it was a period of turbulence, unrest, and civil war, amid which literature, art, and manners flourished or improved only, if at all, in the shadow of the Shogun's court. The Kamakura government—that of the Shogun—soon controlled every channel, as it grasped nearly every symbol, of power which its authority might claim amid a congeries of semi-independent principalities. Whatever measure of general or imperial authority could be exercised amid conditions of practical autocratic rule by the provincial chiefs, was exercised by or through the Shogunate. Yet a permanent political settlement was delayed by the contests of rival aspirants to the Shogunate. These filled the period with the commotions of civil war, as the contentions of claimants to the place of power next to the Emperor had disturbed the period that preceded it. The Shogunate authority, like the Imperial power in its day, became the prize of domestic intrigue and military ambition; and, like the Imperial power, it came to be exercised by its real possessor through a puppet who was Shogun only in name. The Hojo and Ashikaga families successively filled the place of whatever real power and influence could be wielded amid conflicts and tumults always threatening the newest authority or the latest pretender. This is the

'dark age' of Japan, and if not a few figures of heroic proportions move amid its gloom, it is certain that the value of its contribution to Japanese art and literature is counterbalanced by the injury it did to the cause of political peace and progress. That injury not only condemned the country for the time being to the penalties of civil disorder, but it prepared the conditions that made it possible for a strong man and a consummate genius subsequently to bind the nation in the chains of a political and social system, which by its rigidity became transmuted into an imperious formalism denying the native genius of the people all opportunity of spontaneous expression, save in those few spheres of activity which it deemed too contemptible for regulation, and in the sphere of art, whose products are always 'peaceable fruit,' whether under a despotism or a democracy. Towards the close of the sixteenth century Japan stood in obvious need of a strong man. The strong man appeared, but the history of the period he inaugurated showed that his strength was at least excessive for the occasion. Or it should perhaps be said that if political conditions invite a despotism, it is certain that the people whose weakness or turbulence gives despotism the opportunity of conferring upon them the boon of political order and peace must pay for the boon by accepting the dictate of the despotism in other spheres besides the political. Japan got the strong man she needed at the opening of the seventeenth century. She asked internal peace and a settled *régime*. He gave her both. His price for the boon was the servitude of Japan's soul. Japan's marvellous modern era is, in some sense, a protest, an ebullition, a rebellion against this servitude. At the end of two centuries and a half she was ready to

explode. Forty years ago she exploded, and from being the slave of a political and social despotism her released soul has astonished the world with its triumphs and its eccentricities. In the end it is possible that the world, with Japan herself, may be thankful that in Tokugawa Iyeyasu, the strong man who appeared in the time of the country's political need, Japan found also a consummate genius whose despotism, while it appeared to be merely political, was, in fact, nearly universal. From his despotism or its effects springs the unique Japan of to-day. Modern Japanese versatility is the genius of the race rejoicing in its relief from the formalism which his despotism realised through its immobility.

Two great men, Ota Nobunaga and Hachiba Hideyoshi, prepared the way for Tokugawa Iyeyasu. They gave him an example of supreme power evolved from the anarchic condition—realised in spite of the anarchic condition—into which the struggle for the Shogunate or the rivalries of the feudal lords had plunged the country by the middle of the sixteenth century. Both Nobunaga and Hideyoshi failed to erect a fabric of power which their heirs could maintain against determined assault. Iyeyasu himself first dispossessed the heir of Hideyoshi, and then accomplished that which Hideyoshi, though his genius was certainly more powerful, failed to achieve. He framed a polity that secured the supreme power—the Shogunate—to his family, until in a new age the Shogunate itself became an impossibility.

Meanwhile the 'dark age' of Japanese history, though filled with the confusion and tumult of intestine struggles which prevented the settlement of the polity of the country as a united State, fostered, if it did not originate, the conditions that projected into the third



or pre-modern period a society framework whose very form, but especially its remarkable rigidity, was a powerful if negative aid to the despotism of Iyeyasu in its task of assuring the foundations of the country's political peace. From very early times, indeed, the inevitable fissures between the orders of Japanese society had been widening ; but it was in the 'dark age,' the period from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, that the chiefs of the military class, from their contending, or seeming to contend, for control of the destinies of the country, acquired an importance in their own eyes which the judgment of a later time may view as real or fictitious, but which in the time of its being was certainly challenged by no other class. It was in this age, dark with commotions, bright with examples of military virtue and prowess among the class whose factions caused the commotions—it was the conditions of this age that moulded a form and order of society the rigidity of which, if it might suggest a parallel with the caste system of India, was yet free from the taint of religious proscriptions, and in many ways assisted the ends of progress—as it certainly under Tokugawa Iyeyasu assisted the promotion of peace—without extinguishing the people's reasonable hope of ultimate political liberty. The caste system of India, based on religious sanctions, has killed the instinct of liberty in the mass of the people. The class system of old Japan, having no sanction from religion, could not crush the people's 'soul of politics.' It is indeed this soul which is the true hope of Japan's modern era.

Tokugawa Iyeyasu's great task was that of harnessing the military class. All the classes below it—composing the whole of the remainder of society—were already harnessed : they were ready to accept any reasonable

despotism. Immediately below the military class was the class of farmers, from which the military had sprung ; next came the artisans or city labourers ; afterwards the trading or commercial order. One section of the population had no place in society. This was the *eta*, the executioners, the butchers, the grave-diggers, the scavengers, society's sacrifice to the law of waste, its tacit recognition of that rule of the science of physics that no process involving the application of energy—in this case the process of society—shall escape its percentage of loss. The interval between the military class or Samurai and the whole of society below them was very wide. The saliency of their distinctive status was affirmed by the special prescriptions which the class enjoyed in the sight of the law, and by the unprotesting subscription of the lower classes to a postulate of the social and political sanctity of the class above them. There was no such impassable chasm—for it was indeed impassable—isolating the three lower orders one from the other. But the same wide interval appeared between the three lower classes and that section of the population, the *eta*, which stood outwith society. It might almost be said that the Samurai stood as far above the general population as the *eta* stood below it. The fact of great political significance was the unquestioning acquiescence by the several orders in the artificial divisions announcing their distinct status. Only the Samurai were capable of aspiring : the master of the Samurai was the master of the nation. One of the three lower classes might be capable of an isolated ebullition, but a united enterprise of the three was never possible. The habit of acquiescence in their status, through centuries of usage, had become the instinctive acceptance of a natural law. The Samurai were about

five per cent of the total population, and Tokugawa Iyeyasu, when he achieved the domination of the Samurai, became by that very fact the unchallenged lord of the remaining ninety-five per cent.

It might appear, then, that the general conditions at the opening of the pre-modern period in 1600 merely waited upon the will of the man who, being master of the military order, possessed a sufficient genius for statesmanship to devise a system which should perpetuate the control of that order in the hands of his heirs. No such political genius had appeared in four centuries of turbulence and civil war. But now, 'with foresight almost superhuman, Iyeyasu looked into the future, and, by the creation of a political machine nearly perfect, assured to his dynasty a security almost unparalleled.' The framework—the skeleton—of this machine was, in fact, a gratuitous present to Iyeyasu from the era in which his genius arose; but his genius made of this framework, this skeleton, a living political organism enduring almost without modification not only for the period of his life but for ten generations after his death. His genius seized, moulded, and 'fixed' a system which it found 'in being' ready to its hand. The result was both fortunate and unfortunate. His system endured without modification, but also without growth. He was able to secure internal peace to the country, and to realise for the people at least an image of political unity and homogeneousness. At the same time his system, by the rigidity and universality of its symbols and regulations, withheld its proper scope and opportunity from the versatile genius of the people, and gradually degenerated into a social and political formalism. Possibly without rigidity Iyeyasu's system might have broken down early in its career. Yet with it it was

certainly doomed to ultimate collapse. The faction and turbulence against which it had to provide doubtless required a strait-jacket, but the quick and eager Japanese genius could never learn permanently to love its chains.

There has survived down to the present day a document known as the 'Testament' or 'Legacy' of Iyeyasu, which, though its authenticity has not been established beyond doubt, preserves, in the form of a code of one hundred articles or short chapters, the principles of Iyeyasu's system. Of this 'Legacy' a competent critic writes that it 'is the most original monument which Japan has produced in the way of legislation,' and that, 'unlike the other codes before the rise and after the fall of the Shogunate it is purely native in character, with scarcely any mixture of foreign elements.' The 'Legacy' is a faithful mirror of the social and political features of the Japan which preceded the Japan of to-day—the Japan whose fundamental social ethic, conventional thought and practice, domestic manners and customs, industrial rule and method, and religious instincts, in truth live on in the mind and habit of the great mass of the people of the Japan of to-day, without the compelling power of law and prerogative to propagate their prestige and enforce their observance. The Japanese people of to-day are in a thousand respects the Japanese people whose laws of life are defined or prescribed—often, no doubt, under sanctions derived from then existing custom and practice—in the 'Legacy' of Iyeyasu. But whereas those laws were then represented and administered by a visible despotism, the people are now free—they are indeed invited by a constitution—to be arbiters of their own ways and thinkers of their own thoughts, instead of children of a system.

Iyeyasu erected a visible image of his supremacy in the form of an impregnable fortress in Yedo, his capital, the modern Tokyo. He rearranged the fiefs of the provincial barons in order that his sons, kinsmen, or friends might be in a position to 'protect' Kyoto, the Imperial capital, or prevent his enemies by observing them from contiguous territory, and divide their counsels by administering provinces which separated them territorially. A device of equal, if not greater, importance to his end of controlling the barons and killing the seeds of conspiracy before they might germinate was the condition he imposed upon them of spending six months of every year in Yedo, his own capital, and of leaving their wives and families in residence there during the remainder of the year. He strengthened or authorised his system by the necessary recognition of an idea—the sacrosanctity of the Emperor. He affirmed the Emperor's divinity, and seemed to wield the supreme power in his name, though, in truth, by ascribing to the Emperor the attributes and status of a god he succeeded the better in excusing his own usurpation of the temporal sovereignty. This was the political machinery of Iyeyasu's system. It succeeded. His *régime* attained an 'unparalleled security,' which was never in serious jeopardy from inherent defects, even under the weakest of his successors. The feudal barons—the Daimyo—were permitted to administer autocratic authority within their own territories, but if they were ever tempted to imagine the possibility of independence, they never failed to prepare for and undertake the annual journey to Yedo, where their six months' residence constituted a recognition of the supremacy of the Shogun and the Shogunate which could not be effaced from their

political record without an immediate inference of rebellion or conspiracy.

The 'Legacy' of Iyeyasu displays the moral and administrative method of his despotism. It should, perhaps, be said of this method, that it merely accepted or recognised the precepts of conduct and the practices of convention which already permeated the structure of Japanese society. But Iyeyasu 'fixed' these precepts and practices as laws, social and political, to which he bound the conscience of his successors in the sure prospect of solidifying the political edifice he had raised, by founding it, as far as he might, on moral sanctions. His code—the 'Legacy'—approves the existing classification of society. 'The Samurai are the masters of the four classes,' says its forty-fifth chapter, 'and a Samurai is not to be interfered with in cutting down a member of any of the lower classes behaving towards him in a rude manner.' Loyalty of vassals to their lords—the corner-stone dogma of the Samurai creed throughout previous centuries of civil strife—is implied as a natural law rather than inculcated as a duty. The 'family' theory of marriage, already imbedded in the social practice of the country, is duly accepted as a principle, and 'a childless man,' says the forty-seventh chapter, 'should make provision, by the adoption of a child, to ensure the succession of the family estate.' In brief, the code is 'a compilation, not a creation; a selection from old, not a series of new laws.'<sup>1</sup> Yet it was this very acceptance of existing custom and tradition, and their inauguration as law, that mainly fortified Iyeyasu's system. The nation was bound in fetters of its own forging. The fetters were strong, because they were hardly felt. The code itself

<sup>1</sup> W. E. Griffis.

reveals its reputed author's intimate scrutiny of the conditions of power prior to his formulation or application of principles. There is wisdom centuries more modern than Iyeyasu's age in the ninety-second chapter of the 'Legacy': 'When laws are made by the eminent and issued to the people, a nonconformity with the provisions of such laws on the part of the eminent engenders ridicule and opposition on the part of the lower orders.' And the Western world even now wrangles over the principle of the thirty-first chapter: 'High and low alike may follow their own inclinations with respect to religious tenets.<sup>1</sup> . . . Religious disputes have ever proved the bane and misfortune of the Empire, and should be determinedly put a stop to.'

Under the third Shogun of Iyeyasu's line—his grandson—the system inaugurated by a conqueror and coded by a statesman was effectually consolidated. The four principal orders of society lived their prescribed lives within their prescribed ambits. The Shogunate developed and extended that minute paternalism of administrative method which was the logical sequence of its acceptance and regulation of a quasi-caste order of society. Iyeyasu's machinery for the control of the chiefs of fiefs secured the country in the benefits of a general peace and maintained the Shogunate as the supreme legislative and executive authority, paying a nominal deference to the theory of an emperor whose divinity of necessity excused him from the vulgar tasks of government. The system was essentially a despotism which, in Japan's condition of isolation from the world—decreed by Iyeyasu's second

<sup>1</sup> Christianity was excluded from this amnesty of creeds, but it was from political, not religious, motives.

successor—was bound to realise a social and political formalism stifling the national genius and crushing the national spirit, until the dawn of a new idea should startle the nation as the appearance of the sun startles night.

It may fairly be said that Japan's adoption of Western civilisation, though perhaps ultimately inevitable, was an accident in the manner of its actual happening. It was, so to speak, the accidental sequel of another movement. A century or so after the death of Iyeyasu—say in the early eighteenth century—historical criticism raised its head in Japan and revealed the discrepant title of the ruling Shogunate. For a century or more this criticism remained purely academic. It might never have been more, but in the middle of the nineteenth century the blundering of the Shogunate in its dealings with the diplomatic representatives of America and Europe, clamouring for the 'opening' of Japan, invited a political movement on the part of men who already realised that the Emperor's title to the sovereignty was much older than that of the Shogun. The 'Westernisation' of Japan came about virtually as an incident of this movement, and it is curious that the leaders of this movement found their first direct motive of action in the expectation that, under the authority of the Emperor, they might be able to accomplish that which the Shogunate was reluctant or unable to undertake—the expulsion of foreigners and the re-isolation of the country. Influenced by various events, accidental inasmuch as they were not, and could not be, within its purview when it rallied to the Emperor as the real head of the State and the hope of the anti-foreign creed, the Imperial party ultimately accepted the necessity of a pro-foreign policy, and thus undertook the introduction



of Western civilisation, not as an original dominating purpose, but rather as the accidental though still perhaps unavoidable sequel of a movement really contemplating the abolition of the Shogunate and the restoration of the Emperor, and, at its initiation, the re-adoption of the policy of isolation.

### III

## THE MODERN ERA

IN the movement that culminated in the adoption by Japan of the civilisation of Europe the Japanese people had no part. This fact is of the utmost importance to an understanding of the history of the movement ; it accounts for most of its characteristic features at the present stage of its progress ; it is, probably, the master-key to its future. From all the revolutions of European history that of Japan—if the total fact of the modern Japanese era may be given the name and style of ‘revolution’—is distinguished by this circumstance, that in its initiation and early prosecution the people of the country had no share. In Japan the opposite of the European habit and custom is commonly the rule ; the modern movement is itself an example of this curious opposition. It is an astonishing upheaval, which began not from the bottom but from the top.

The political despotism, with its correlative, the social formalism, of the feudal era effectually disfranchised the people. Or, rather, this despotism and this formalism effectually prevented their enfranchisement. The people were without true political status, and the habit of consent to, or content in, their condition had become second nature. They were almost unconscious of their

exclusion from politics ; they scarcely knew the great human 'interest' which goes by that name among us ; they beheld their superiors, the Samurai, and their rulers, the Daimyo and the Shogun, as part of the order of nature. A tyranny of cruelty and blood might have aroused them. It is a testimony to the comparative beneficence of the feudal despotism of Japan, that no serious insurrection of the people marks its seven or eight hundred years of history. At the end of that period the Japanese people were still incapable of revolution for an 'idea,' but their masters proved responsive to the motive, and Japan's modern era duly dawned—an astounding idea and a profound revolution, though it began from the top.

Sir Ernest Satow, perhaps the first living authority of Europe on Japanese history and archæology, names the compiler of the *Dai Nihonshi*, a history of Japan (down to 1413) completed about 1715, the real author of the movement that culminated in the revolution of 1868—the movement of which the 'Europeanisation' of Japan was, as has been said, a sequel. In this work the light of historical criticism was turned upon the Shogun's title to the sovereignty of the country, revealing it to the eyes of Japanese savants in the dubious character of a usurpation. It is a question whether any such verdict, based on whatever apparently sound historical data, could be just, for what political sovereignty can be alleged as illegal after seven hundred years, without the title of every government and authority in the wide world being upon the very instant called in question? It is not a grave question, but among other curious features of the inauguration of Japan's modern era this ought to be enumerated, that the movement out of which it grew

was a movement challenging—successfully challenging—the legality of a sovereignty which had been part of the Japanese political system for seven centuries! What, then, constitutes legality?

Perhaps it is best to go deeper than this for the truly influential motive of the movement that threw the Shogun out of the saddle of power, and presaged the complete conversion of Japan to Western methods and her partial adoption of Western ideals. It is not usual to find a great positive movement inspired by a gospel of negative criticism and analysis. The compiler of the *Dai Nihonshi*, while as a faithful historian he brought into strong relief the fact that the Shogun was originally an appointee of the Mikado to an office covering little more than the duties of a commander-in-chief, and might, therefore—upon a hypothesis of precedent and usage and custom constituting no essential element of law—be challenged as a usurper, exercising autocratic powers under a title that originally conferred nothing more than the life-rent of a generalissimo's functions—while this might be, as it was, the illuminating effect of the *Dai Nihonshi's* review of the origin of the Shogunate, it is necessary, in order to account for the movement that abolished the Shogunate in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, to assume that this negative historical criticism engendered a positive revolutionary force—Japanese nationalism. And this without doubt it did. The animus of the nineteenth-century movement against the Shogun was not so much its authors' presumption—for, after all, it could be little more than a presumption—of the illegality of the Shogun's status, as their feeling that the Mikado more truly than the Shogun represented and embodied Japan as an entity

and an original national individuality. For a century and a half the Shogunate contemplated with comparative indifference the promulgation of the academic decision of historical criticism that its title was defective. The promulgation never during this extensive period became more than academic.<sup>1</sup> But the Japanese nationalism to which it gave birth slowly gathered force, and by the middle of the nineteenth century this nationalism was the positive power behind that negative motive which hinged on a denial of the authenticity of the Shogun's title—a denial which asserted that seven hundred years of use and wont are not to be reckoned in an estimation of the law of a particular case! This nationalism, fostered by the researches and commentaries of some of the greatest minds of Japanese literature, turned its eyes towards antique Japan—the Japan of Izanagi and Izanami, divine progenitors of the living Mikado, the Japan of celestial origin, the Japan that knew no servitude to the political maxims and the moral philosophies of China,—an alien land; the Japan that worshipped its own gods and gave no spiritual tribute to the gods of Buddhism,—an alien creed. In short, there was a Japanese revival in literature, criticism, and religion, and this revival necessarily impeached the sanctions of every institution, every code, every ideal borrowed or copied from China. Chinese philosophy suffered, Confucianism suffered, Chinese political methods suffered, Buddhism suffered in its hour, and the Shogunate suffered because it was less antique, and therefore less Japanese, than the Mikadoate, and because it could make no pretence to a genealogy

<sup>1</sup> One of the feudal lords made an attempt, in the thirties of last century, to assert the Emperor's rights by force, but the movement quickly perished from lack of support.

having its fountain in the commerce of gods and goddesses. Of Motoöri, the greatest of the littérateurs whose writings encouraged this revival, a high authority, Mr. B. H. Chamberlain, writes: 'To him more than to any other man is due the movement which restored the Mikado to his ancestral rights,' and another of the few foreign experts in Japanese historical development, Mr. W. G. Aston, says of him: 'His works helped materially to enfranchise the Japanese nation from their moral and intellectual servitude to China, and to produce a spirit of self-reliance and patriotism which at a subsequent period became translated into political action.' Motoöri died in 1801. The last of the Shoguns gave place to the first of the restored Mikados—the present Emperor—in 1868, after a decade of political turmoil and chaos. Thus, beginning early in the eighteenth century, the revival of Japanese antiquities—though critics of the first importance, native and foreign, esteem it the true or first cause of the Japanese revolution—for a century and a half remained a purely academic and literary movement. It is certain, however, that this movement, destructive of the authority and prestige of the Chinese political, moral, and social formalism, maintained by the Shogunate despotism, became constructive by engendering that Japanese nationalism which has been the informing soul and the potent driving force of the whole modern era. This nationalism, at first a theory, ultimately became a protest against the rigid formalism and the universal despotism of the system of Iyeyasu.

The academic revival of antique Japan—it was chiefly a revival of Shintoism, the antique Japanese religious cult linking the Mikado with the gods—was the achievement of scholars; the political movement of the

middle decades of the nineteenth century, which it partly inspired, was the enterprise of statesmen. Neither scholars nor statesmen took their cue from the people. The scholars could not appeal to a people unenlightened beyond the duty of accepting or believing in the existing order of things; the statesmen who engineered a political movement could not expect the co-operation of a people who, in the accepted theory of society, had no real political status. In the later progress of the modern movement the people duly inspired the enthusiasm of the new nationalism; in the beginning and in the early stages of the movement they were the passive, unconscious objects of the inherent or ultimate purpose of the movement. To-day they—the people, the destiny of the movement—are still very largely in the hands of their leaders, the survivors or the successors of the statesmen who, translating into action the academic opinions of the historical critics who preceded them, banished the Shogun from the seats of power, and almost unwittingly cleared the way for that greater revolution—the ‘Europeanisation’ of Japan.

The arrival in Japan in the fifties of last century of representatives of the leading foreign Powers—the representative of the United States was the first to appear on the scene—to negotiate reciprocal treaties for the ‘opening,’ as it is called, of Japan to the world and the world’s trade and commerce, may be said to have acted as an acid, ‘precipitating’ the anti-Shogunate nationalism already in a latent form pervading the mind of the country. In the earlier negotiations the Shogun—or his ministers for him—acted as if the Shogunate were the true and only sovereignty in the land. This, in fact, it had for centuries been, but the political opinion of the country—that of the feudal lords, the Daimyo,

and their retainers, the Samurai—informed by the historical criticism which for over a century had been insisting on the older and superior title of the Mikado, took the opportunity, which the Shogun's independent negotiation with the European plenipotentiaries seemed to offer, of opening the whole question of the validity of the Shogunate's status. The Shogunate concluded treaties with the foreign plenipotentiaries on its own responsibility. It would have preferred not to do so—the strange story of its attempts to avoid doing so, and of the causes of their failure, is told in Sir Rutherford Alcock's *The Capital of the Tycoon*. It shared the general Japanese sentiment of the time—antipathy towards foreigners and foreign things, and opposition to or apprehension of the 'opening' of the country. Having signed treaties, the Shogunate must undertake responsibility for their fulfilment. Principally from its efforts to discharge this responsibility arose a condition of political chaos and the opportunity of the party of the Mikado. From the conflict and confusion of passions and parties, darkening the records of the years from the first conclusion of treaties in 1854 to the overthrow of the Shogunate in 1868, only the tendencies that survived to inaugurate the modern era need here be disentangled. The anti-foreign, anti-Shogunate party virtually took possession of the Mikado and of Kyoto, the Mikado's capital. Its motives were mixed. One or two of its leaders aimed at the overthrow of the Shogunate, merely in the hope of re-erecting it and administering it in their own persons. Others from the first contemplated the total abolition of the Shogunate and the reconstitution of the state upon the basis of the Mikado's undivided sovereignty. Others hoped exclusively for the expulsion



of foreigners and the settlement of the country under the same dual sovereignty of Mikado and Shogun which had been working with moderate efficiency before the arrival of the foreigners. The crisis of one day saw Emperor and Shogun acting in concert against a rebellious clan; that of the morrow beheld the rebellious clan warring to rescue the Emperor from the clutches of the Shogunate party. The Emperor put his seal to an edict for the forcible expulsion of the foreigners; the hour of the triumph of his party found its leaders persuaded that it was not only necessary but desirable to accept the treaties concluded by the Shogunate, and to proceed with the remodelling of the institutions of the country upon the example and the methods of the civilisation of the formerly despised foreigners. It is difficult in the midst of the chaos to find traces of that motive, which nevertheless, in the perspective of history, has been esteemed by the most learned critics to be the profoundest and the steadiest of the influences underlying the events that introduced the modern era in Japan—the motive arising from the protest of the new Japanese nationalism against the usurpation of the sovereign powers by the Shogunate. But the year 1866 found a distinct Mikado party and a distinct Shogun party in the field for mutual war. The day went with the former, and in 1867 the Shogun resigned and left his followers to be finally crushed in a desultory campaign ending in 1870. The year 1868 saw the Mikado supreme and sole sovereign of Japan, and the rise to power and influence in his party of men who either accepted the necessity or affirmed the policy of 'opening' the country and adopting Western civilisation. The treaties with the foreign Powers were finally ratified; the Imperial capital was transferred from Kyoto

to Tokyo ; amnesty to the followers and supporters of the Shogunate was proclaimed, and affairs were put in train for the 'Europeanisation' of institutions. The modern era was thus inaugurated as the sequel, almost the accidental sequel, of a movement wholly different in aim and intention, and at one time actually opposed to the idea which the modern era expressed and developed. The movement out of which the modern era grew was a movement for the subversion of the Shogunate by reason of the adverse verdict which historical criticism and national feeling had pronounced upon the authenticity of its title to the sovereignty. That movement at first inscribed upon its banners the motto 'Expulsion of Foreigners.' Chiefly upon the strength of the appeal of this rallying-cry it achieved its covert purpose of pulling down the Shogunate ; for the latter's immediate offence against national sentiment was its failure to prevent the hated foreigners from planting themselves in the country, and not its ancient usurpation of the sovereign powers of the State. But events won over the party of the Mikado to the very policy which they had chiefly execrated in the record of their opponents ; their motto was changed from 'Expulsion of Foreigners' to 'Welcome to Western Civilisation,' and the Shogunate, in the hour of its fall, might well have mocked its enemies with a taunt of their apostasy. The party of the Mikado overthrew the Shogunate chiefly on an appeal to the national sentiment against the opening of the country. Yet, having triumphed, they not only adopted the very policy which they had denounced in the Shogunate, but went farther in its prosecution than the Shogunate ever dreamt of going. The modern era in Japan is, in its way, an example of the revenges of history. Its prin-

cial authors forswore themselves when they brought it into being.

There is thus a curious quality of fortuity in the fact of the emergence of modern Japan upon the world's stage. Ultimately inevitable, because the genius of such a people must ultimately have burst the bonds of seclusion and insularity in which it was swathed, Japan's modern era, in the circumstances of its inauguration, has much of the appearance of an accident. The modern movement was at first imposed on the country—on the intelligence of its influential leaders—as a political necessity, and if afterwards it assumed in the general mind of the country the character and status of an idea, it can hardly be said that even to-day it is more than an intellectual Idea. It is a mistake to suppose that the heart of Japan, its passion, its emotional enthusiasm, were captivated by the idea of the 'Europeanisation' of the country. 'In those exciting times,' Marquis Ito has said of the beginning of the era in which he has been the most prominent figure—'In those exciting times little thought entered the minds of men other than the all-absorbing idea of restoring supreme power to the dynasty of the Mikadoes.' It may be said that the nation's heart, its deep affections, its emotional enthusiasm, were captured by another 'idea' before that of the 'Westernisation' of their country was fairly put before it. Their Emperor, from whom, as it might seem to them, they had been for a thousand years estranged, had come to his own again; he was replaced in the eminent seat of supreme political sovereignty from which he had for a millenium been excluded, and in the very act of mounting the steps of the political throne he climbed, as it were, into the heart of the

nation as the true representative of its most ancient traditions, the supreme pontiff of its ancient faith, the sign of its high eclectic destiny and the symbol of its new absorbing sense of unity and homogeneousness. That which is unique, extraordinary, and even astounding about modern Japan in the eyes of the outer world—its successful adoption of an alien civilisation—has never been an emotional ideal of the Japanese nation, for their heart was already held in the embrace of another passion.

The important and impressive facts about the origin of the modern movement in Japan thus are, that it began almost as the incidental sequel of a prior revolution ; that its origin was not with the people, but with their leaders ; and that it was from the beginning, as it still in effect is, an intellectual upheaval. The manifest inferences are that it has not drawn the nation's heart away from the ancient objects of its devotion ; that it is a movement in which the leaders and their intelligence and capacity are of supreme importance ; that it is unique among revolutions—since it is unlike all others ; and that it thus promises an original future.

There will be occasion to review various phases of the progress of the modern era as this volume proceeds. Its outstanding dates and events may be set down here in their chronological order. The feudal polity was abolished in 1871, a centralised administration in Tokyo displacing the territorial *régimes* of the Daimyo.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is not too much to say that it was the surrender by the Daimyo of their rights as semi-independent princes that made modern Japan possible. By a few of them this surrender was made in the full knowledge of its certain consequence—their political extinction. To their patriotism and self-sacrifice modern Japan owes an incalculable obligation. Most of them, however, made the surrender without real knowledge ; some of them made it reluctantly ; a few of them yielded only to *force majeure*.

Concomitantly the old order of society disappeared. The Samurai lost their swords and their special privileges; the *eta* or outcasts were admitted to the ranks of humanity, and three more or less informal classes emerged in the reconstruction—nobility, gentry, and commoners, the barriers between each class being no longer, of course, fixed or impassable. This was, perhaps, the most radical and far-reaching of all the reforms of the era, and, characteristically, it was virtually the first. European and American instructors and advisers were brought to the country. Americans directed the reorganisation of education; law was codified, first by Frenchmen, afterwards by Germans. A navy was created under the guidance of Englishmen; the army was re-created, first by Frenchmen, then (after the Franco-German war) by Germans. Railroads, telegraphs, docks, a mint, a postal system, lighthouses, newspapers, modern European industries, all the various materials for a fabric of modern civilisation, were imported and ‘erected’ in the land, almost always under foreign supervision. An Imperial University was founded in Tokyo in 1872; the Gregorian calendar displaced the Chinese in 1873; a Senate and an Assembly of Governors—the first attempts at representative government—opened in 1875; a first National Exhibition was held in 1877. A rebellion, whose success might have stopped the modern era in mid-career, was quelled in 1877. A penal code and code of criminal procedure were promulgated in 1880; constitutional government was formally promised in 1881; a Bank of Japan was founded in 1882; in 1884 orders of nobility, with German and English features, were instituted; a Privy Council was established in 1888; the Constitution was formally promul-

gated in the following year, and in 1890 the Imperial Diet assembled for its first session. Civil and commercial codes were promulgated in the same year, a 'revised version' of the former appearing in 1898. In 1894 'revised' treaties, whereby the extra-territorial system was abolished, were successfully negotiated with the Powers, and they came into operation in 1899.<sup>1</sup> A second University was founded in Kyoto, the former capital, and every succeeding year has witnessed additions to or improvements upon the original foundation of every modern institution, industry, practice, or method inaugurated by the makers of the modern era.

<sup>1</sup> Under the extra-territorial system subjects of the foreign treaty Powers resident in Japan were governed under their own laws, administered, in the first instance, by their consuls. At the 'open' ports, where alone they might reside, unless in special cases, they were allotted an area of land, which was designated the 'foreign settlement.' This area was outwith the jurisdiction of the Japanese Courts—hence 'extra-territorial.' Japan almost from the opening of her relations with the world felt the system as a stigma on her civilisation, if not on her honour. England first conceded her right to its abolition.

## IV

### LEADERS AND PEOPLE

EUROPE tends to see in the Japanese a remarkable nation without individuals, but in truth it is its individuals who are remarkable. We refer the achievements of the Japanese leaders to the genius of the Japanese people, whereas it may certainly be affirmed that in no other country is the interval between leaders and people so wide. It is scarcely, indeed, wresting the facts to affirm that the interval between the Japanese leaders and the Japanese people is an abyss. It may not, perhaps, be said that the abyss signifies opposition or misunderstanding, or that it asserts an open tyranny of the leaders and a latent rebellion of the people. There is a bridge, there are bridges, spanning the abyss. The nation's patriotism, or sense of nationality, guarantees its essential homogeneity, and the people repose with a child-like faith on the infallibility of their Emperor, whose warrant approves almost every policy, every demand, every exaction of the leaders, howsoever the people, separated by an abyss from the leaders, may fail to understand or to appreciate. The abyss is not an abyss of antipathy or of indifference, nor does it import a deficiency of sympathy in the mass of the people towards the aims and the hopes, the efforts and the

achievements, of the leaders. Not against the desire or contrary to the will of the Japanese people has Japan been made a modern state by the Japanese leaders ; nor does the modern era rest upon the unsteady sands of popular indifference or popular dislike. The Japanese are too eager, too alert, too curious a people to be indifferent ; they are too worldly-wise to oppose. Rather might it be said that the Japanese people are ignorant in those things wherein their leaders have achieved a truly cosmopolitan breadth of knowledge ; they are inexperienced in those affairs in which their leaders have achieved a facility beyond the attempt of their most illustrious contemporaries, the statesmen of the world. No people of any civilised state are farther in the rear of their leaders ; none is so easily led by them. In no state is there the same gulf between the education, the thought, the practice, the efficiency of the people, and the education, thought, practice, and efficiency of their masters ; in none is the administration—one might say the dictatorship—of their masters accepted by the people with the same implicit confidence or the same patient, unprotesting docility. Nowhere is the function of government so comprehensive, so providential, so minute ; nowhere, perhaps, is its comprehensiveness, its providence, and its minuteness more necessary ; nowhere, on the whole, is it in these respects more acceptable ; nowhere, certainly, is it in these respects more amiably tolerated.

The distinction, the difference, between leaders and people in Japan is, in truth, of the utmost importance. An appreciation of it is the more necessary as to Japan, because it can hardly be said to exist, for the observer's perception, in Western political communities. In some of the latter, indeed, it is usual and proper to look



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outside the actively political or administrative circle for the nation's minds of greatest capacity and widest culture, as well as for the most efficient systems and methods in the detail of the nation's activities. No such discrimination against the managers of the national affairs is permissible as to Japan; none, in fact, could be more truly misleading; no presumption could offer a more treacherous foundation for a theory of the Japanese state or for a philosophy of its remarkable history. In our Western political communities the leaders are primarily delegates and representatives. Amid the universal conflict of ideals in our politics they seldom succeed in representing more than a section of their constituents. Transcendent genius has succeeded, and will no doubt again succeed, in embodying the thought and sentiment of a people, and in executing a people's purpose, scarcely understood by themselves. This, however, is exceptional. Our leaders represent a certain body of opinion, for the time being the larger body. They are usually a little way ahead of the opinion they represent; a slightly greater measure of illumination is their title to represent the opinion which they have but succeeded in formulating clearly—in announcing in an aphorism or embodying in a principle. To be a little way ahead of the people, and never to go ahead so as to be out of sight, is the art of leadership in communities that will not brook to be flouted by autocratic pretension or irritated by the utterance of truths they do not understand. Our communities demand to be ruled by themselves; they even require to be enlightened only by truths which they shall seem to have evolved from their own inner consciousness. The apotheosis of democracy is achieved when it worships itself. We do not require our leaders

to be seers ; we ask them only to tell us what we have been thinking, or trying to think. We ask them, as a general rule, to do our bidding ; the highest flight we permit them is to divine what our bidding would be if we knew what we wanted.

No situation, as between leaders and led, so little resembles the situation in Japan. No compact between leaders and led is less like that which is between the Japanese leaders and the Japanese people. The difference is immensely important ; some perception of it is necessary, even absolutely essential, to an understanding of the Japanese system ; of the forces at work in the events of the Japanese present, and of the tendencies converging for the evolution of the Japanese future.

It is almost necessary, in discussing Japan, to begin with a clear understanding as to which Japan it is proposed to discuss—the official and modern Japan, the Japan, that is to say, of the Japanese leaders ; or the unofficial and traditional Japan, the Japan of the Japanese people. Some of the peculiar character of the time is, indeed, common to both. Both Japans may be said to meet, for instance, on the social plane. Both Japans meet at the altars of a patriotism which is a cult when it is not a religion. They are at one, they are one, in their attitude towards themselves and their Emperor. Looking to the past they are one ; fundamentally they are one also looking to the future. It is in method that there are two Japans ; it is in the measure of their skill in a new method—that of Europe—that a differentiation, everywhere patent, is always to be allowed. Without apprehending and allowing this differentiation Japan is very nearly inexplicable. It is chiefly from the omission to allow or from the failure

to perceive this differentiation that the conflict of the many contrary accounts of Japan has sprung. That which properly appertains to the one has been improperly attributed or referred to the other, and the failure to delimit spheres has often brought inextricable confusion upon attempts to harmonise jurisdictions and their effects.

The incongruities and contradictions native to the Japanese character and system, before the multiform confusions of the new era were superimposed on the country, are sufficient indeed, in their surviving forms, to endow Japanese appearances with a full measure of eccentricity and contrariety. There are Japanese eccentricities that antedate the modern era, and the latter—visualised in the two Japans, which may be styled, with rough accuracy, the official Japan and the unofficial—emphasises the complexity of the general ensemble. We of the West are accustomed, for example, to a certain uniformity of moral qualities and moral standards in human character. Honesty and uprightness seem to us, with our intensely, almost absurdly logical method, the expected characteristics of a brave people. The presumption may be the child of a prejudice—perhaps of a prejudice merely English in origin and history—but whatever its parentage, it is a presumption which is ingrained in our method with life. We are used to think and to act upon a presumption of certain moral affinities. We hear with astonishment of an instance of magnanimity in a thief; and there would be a contradiction almost incredible in the suggestion of an honest or highly virtuous man who was a craven coward. Yet in Japan there is, and there was before the modern Japanese era, a people both brave and, according to Western standards, dishonest. Recent momentous events

have finally proved the Japanese a race imbued with a stoic heroism which is so unfamiliar to the age and its inclinations that it strikes us of Europe and the West as a kind of anachronism. A Western world has been puzzled to uneasiness by certain sublime acts of immolation by the Japanese rank and file—artisans, tradesmen, labourers in peace-time—and it has fallen back on a half-consolatory reflection of ‘fanaticism.’ Well, this race, which dies so easily, is also a dishonest race—or, if this seem, as it may be, a too harsh and sweeping generalisation, they are an indirect and concealing race—and we of the Western world are at once, on the very threshold of any attempt to display Japan, face to face with a clear disproof of our theory of moral affinities. Simplicity is a quality that is almost always lacking from the very finest Japanese characters. The code of the Samurai itself, high and exacting as that of King Arthur and his knights in many articles, sanctioned the uses of double-dealing, and of old authorised some despicable treacheries. Yet a braver, more heroic figure than the Samurai scarcely appears in all the dim tapestries of Europe’s knightly age. The Japanese merchant of to-day is very often a trickster and frequently a cheat ; yet his sons have lately died on Manchurian battlefields and in the sea-gates of Port Arthur as those would die who in their moments of highest ecstasy yearn to emulate the heroism they adore. Again, the occurrence of the materialistic habit of mind along with a humanising practice of courtesy, kindness, and toleration, is a perplexing association for the western mind in its instinctive expectation of a system of collateral virtues or correlated vices. In a mind which is by instinct prone to narrow interpretations of the worth of life we do not expect to meet a habit of sincere and elaborated

deference to the graces and refinements of the human relations. Yet this contrariety is part of the Japanese character. So materialistic in instinct and habit as to be almost incapable even of conceiving metaphysical ideas, the Japanese are yet notoriously the most genuine and the most consistent practisers of the graces and the charities of life ; and in the result they are at once the most benevolent of peoples and yet at heart perhaps the most worldly.

Comprehensive generalisations are impossible in presence of these characteristic contradictions, and the difficulty of stating the case about Japan is immensely increased by the extraordinary chasm of differentiation between the Japan of the Japanese leaders and the Japan of the Japanese people. To understand Japan it is first necessary to realise that the Western system of moral affinities and sequences—which is perhaps only a merely ideal creation of the Western synthetic process—is not applicable there. It is further necessary to remember that there are two Japans—the Japan of the reform leaders and the Japan of the Japanese people, who, almost too far behind to see the light of their leaders' leading, grope painfully, yet cheerfully and hopefully, towards the fire of the distant beacon.

There is hardly a sphere of Japanese activity or endeavour in which the gulf between leaders and led does not appear. The standard example of the Japan of the reform leaders is the national army and navy. These splendid creations are in no sense representative of Japan save as to the spirit of heroic patriotism animating officers and men, as it animates leaders and people. In their efficiency, their equipment, their *matériel*, their organisation, their method, their success, they are almost incalculably superior to the Japanese

average, if that could be ascertained from so irregular and confused a jumble of attainment as modern Japan presents. In point of scientific precision of method, and of technical completeness and efficiency, no less than in respect of the extraordinarily high *morale* of its masters and its servants, the Japanese fighting machine has been shown to rank with the best in the world. But it would be an egregious misreading of the plainest signs of the times in Japan to regard the Japanese army and navy, in respect of the scientific precision of their service and the technical sufficiency of their *matériel*, as reliable indices of the standard of equipment and capacity in Japan's industrial and manufacturing economy. The Japanese fighting machine is truly a model ; the Japanese industrial and manufacturing machine is as truly an anachronism. The former is the creation of the Japanese leaders ; the latter is the legacy of the Japanese people from their fathers, with some increase of efficiency in method, some addition of power, and some elaboration of detail, since the days of their fathers. The Japanese reform leaders were assisted rather than embarrassed by the circumstance that there was neither a Japanese army nor a Japanese navy when the powers of state came into their hands in the form of a despotism forty years ago. They were able to begin at the beginning ; to create, that is to say, and, almost unhampered by tradition, almost unfettered by prejudice, they were able to fashion the country's fighting machine, and to equip it, in harmony with the surest principles deduced from European experience. Moreover, they, the leaders, have always commanded relatively large financial resources and the willing service and co-operation of the brightest and best trained minds among the younger generations of their countrymen.

These have been the conditions, this the opportunity, assisting the task of the Japanese leaders in other instances of their remarkable success. It is their discernment of principles, amounting almost to genius, certainly indicating the highest forms of statesmanship—it is this, the true genesis of their success, not so much the success itself, that is remarkable. In other words, it is they, not so much the Japanese people, who are remarkable. Whenever the Japanese people are secure of freedom of choice ; in whatever decision their voice may have a determining weight, Japan nearly always ceases to be remarkable. This is, in some sense, the expression of the difference, the measure of the abyss between leaders and led in Japan. The former are precocious, if not inspired ; the latter are ordinary, if not reactionary. It is with the consent of impotence rather than the approval of intelligence that the Japanese people accept the leadership of their leaders. The Japanese Government—otherwise the Japanese leaders—in its relations with foreign Powers has established a diplomatic record which, for honesty and directness of method and consistency of practice, has in recent years shone with a steadier lustre than the record of any Government of Europe ; but the Japanese people in their commercial methods remain wedded to the tradition of concealment, device, art, and manœuvre which they have received from their fathers of the feudal era. The leaders have been wise to perceive that direct and straightforward dealing is the surest passport to the respect and recognition of foreign Powers ; they have discerned that this is the most modern and most approved method, not the method of art and reserve and moral economy ; and by their devotion in practice to the highest forms of truth—ultimately connoting the best policy—as they have

perceived it, they have raised the country to a place in the esteem of the political world immeasurably higher than the station occupied in the hierarchy of commerce by the commercial class of the country. The latter remains wedded to tradition ; the Japanese leaders have entered into an alliance with reason and truth.

The face of the country, the aspect of the nation's life, is dotted with the contrasts and incongruities of a divided allegiance. A Japanese army and navy surprise the world ; Japanese popular superstition also surprises the world, but in a contrary sense and to a contrary effect. The Japanese Government guarantees and guards liberty of conscience ; yet convention is an iron law in Japanese social practice. The teaching of religion is prohibited in Japanese schools, but unfilial conduct has a character of sacrilege in the eyes of the Japanese masses, and it is never justified. The Japanese General Staff has its own Arisaka field-gun and its own Shimose powder. Yet Japanese agriculture is served by ox-ploughs with wooden coulters ; the hand-flail is the usual threshing-machine, and the farmers winnow their grain by pouring it through the air from the level of their heads on a breezy day. The modern era in Japan is the achievement of a few resolute men of marked individuality ; the leaders of to-day are remarkable not only as a body, but as members of a body. They are equally distinguished as personalities and as a group. Yet among the Japanese masses the absence of individuality and of the capacity for initiative is one of the most obvious negative evidences of a profound and widespread attachment to conservative instincts. In politics the leaders have not hesitated, and they do not hesitate, from the most daring experi-



ments, yet the notion has scarcely been born in the Japanese popular mind of the worth and the dignity of franchise rights. Japanese history emerges in the seventh century of our era from the mists of an absurd and immoral mythology. In the Japanese popular mind this mythology is still history, or more than history, for they accept as dogma its assertion of the divine origin of the Imperial family. Yet, withal, probably no band of national leaders exercises so just and discriminating a function of criticism, *vis-à-vis* the religious, political, humanitarian, ethical professions of their contemporaries of the world, as does that of Japan. They are, for instance, informed upon many of the most modern objections urged against the canonical authority of Christianity, and they are skilled to discern the contrasts between the professions and the conduct, between the ostensible motive and the realised act, of the Christian nations.

In a word, there are two Japans, the Japan of the Japanese leaders and the Japan of the Japanese people. They meet on a plane of patriotism, and there are, ultimately, only slight differences of social habit in the workaday life of the two. In ideas, political and religious; in thought, speculative and practical; in method, particular and general, the differences are very great and very important. The abyss, its character and dimensions, may be suggested by a definition of the modern era in Japan as an attempt, so far successful, at a drastic and almost universal reform from above. This attempt as yet recoils from an assault upon the ideas at the base of the structure of Japanese society; yet it has not hesitated to impose upon that society the framework of a political constitution. Social ideas it will probably never attempt wholly to transmute; the

political constitution is, up to the present, its most curious and perhaps most hazardous experiment.

A question of the future necessarily is—which of the two Japans is to hold the balance of power? That of the leaders, though it has been the Japan of a mere handful of indomitable empiricists, has up till now easily controlled the levers of power. The transference of these levers to the other Japan—that of the Japanese people—might not now fatally menace the fabric of the modern state. But without doubt this transference might obscure the path to the future with strange difficulties and uncongenial crises. And the Japanese political constitution seems to imply that even the leaders contemplate this transference.

## V

### THE SOCIAL ORDER

THE two Japans meet on the plane of patriotism and nationalism. They are, therefore, emotionally, and thus essentially, homogeneous. The chasm between leaders and led is an intellectual chasm, or a chasm of method. Notwithstanding the brilliant success—success of organisation, of technical precision and scientific skill—of the Japanese army and navy, it is certain that the Japanese, as a nation, are as yet relatively inefficient in European industries, and that even in the native or purely indigenous manufactures there are defects of organisation, of *morale*, and of method which, were industrial competence or manufacturing capacity the sole measure of national power or the main support of political prestige, would condemn Japan to quite a humble place among contemporary states. The Japanese army and navy represent the European education, the European science, the European training, the European precedents—the European instincts, it might be said—of the Japanese governing class, who are, so to say, one Japanese state; while such Western industries as have been adopted by the Japanese who are governed as yet rest almost entirely upon the uninformed, unscientific, and untrained method of the mass of the

Japanese people, who are, so to say, another Japanese state.

It has to be reckoned that while the vital national affairs of the country, and some of its larger private interests—as its leading banks, its two great shipping companies, its foreign trading corporations of the first rank, two or three in number, and its largest manufacturing organisations—are managed under the theory and practice of the European code, the greater part of the country's social and material economy is scarcely released from the bondage of the purely Japanese tradition. Here is one explanation of Japanese naval and military efficiency, collateral with Japanese incompetence—comparative incompetence—in most of the industrial categories the Japanese have taken from Europe without having the means or the will to adopt the theory and practice of the European industrial code. It is thus a fundamental error to esteem the achievement and capacity of the Japanese state and people on the basis of particular efforts or particular institutions in the organisation and conduct of which the nation's total fund of European science and method tends to be concentrated. The Japanese navy is only in a limited sense typical of Japan and the Japanese achievement. A juster appreciation of the latter might be procured by a comparison of the Japanese navy with—for example—Japanese railways, and the mean of absolute truth, to be ascertained by inclusion of all the phenomena, might indicate a general standard beside which the Japanese navy should seem to be ten times more wonderful than it is.

It might be too much to say that the wide interval betwixt the achievements of European science where it dominates the Japanese tradition, and the failures of

the Japanese tradition where it is governed by only a modicum of European method, could be expressed, in its relation to the Japanese social order, by an affirmation that in Japan there are two classes—those who have visited the West—Europe or America—and those who have not. It would be a new theory of classes, of which, indeed, modern Japan might not be incapable, but it is, perhaps, sufficient if the distinction be regarded as to a small extent including the social order in its incidence. Otherwise, the two Japans are emotionally and thus essentially homogeneous, and it might be difficult to discover in the Japanese social state any class distinction importing a degree of antagonism to the principle of national homogeneousness greater than that implied by the fact that the governing class is wholly converted to European method and practice, while the governed still very commonly abide by the Japanese tradition. When one has said that in the Japanese state there are people who have visited Europe or America, and others who have not, one enumerates all the forces of opposition and division that need be regarded as vital or fundamental. One carries the inference of this distinction a little farther, and by affirming that which is the actual truth, that there are people in Japan who would prescribe limits to the policy of 'Europeanisation' or 'Westernisation,' and others who would not, one announces the only essential principle of political difference, and possibly the one truly salient motive of political opposition upon which the fabric of a workable party system will ever be raised.

For, though the continuing practice of a code of exaggerated social punctilio serves to maintain the appearance, and indeed some of the reality, of the quasi-

caste system of the pre-modern era, that era had already seen the birth or at least the reappearance of a fervent, idealistic nationalism, which imparts to Japanese society a characteristic of sub-conscious homogeneity almost unique in its political saliency. Under every superficial appearance of class division or opposition in the social *ménage*, underlying every appearance of diverse faction in the political arena, this homogeneity, based upon a new-born passion of nationalism, or upon a dogma of loyalty which in the conditions of the modern era has made of that virtue a religion—this homogeneity makes of the nation, for national purposes, a more compact and therefore more effective political body than is commanded or led by the statesmen of any other of the leading polities of the world. True, of Japan it is seldom safe to say more than that the existing conditions are the conditions for the time being alone. An era of drastic change—even if it be intellectual and from above—is necessarily an era in which there are no conditions, howsoever salient for the time being, to be accounted permanent. Some observers see in the Japanese political and social state of the time signs which they take for premonitions of future discord and division. Yet it can hardly be gainsaid that if indeed there are states that appear to give more promise of the ultimate lapse of class distinctions, there is none more free from the divergencies of interest and feeling that preserve class barriers, and are in fact their first and last support. No nation to the same degree ‘feels’ as a whole, none therefore is more powerful for the achievement of aims of which the essential cause and inspiration is feeling. None could be so easily moulded to great purposes by great leaders, none, possibly, so readily corrupted by bad

ones, none so blindly led astray by the incompetence of leaders.

The 'estates' of other realms are held together mainly by bonds of interest. The potent medium of Japanese unity is identity of feeling, permeating the structure of society from top to bottom. It is even doubtful if there be a Japanese 'provincialism.' The 'metropolitan' sense, as opposed to, or as distinguished from, the 'provincial' mind—in such various interests as those of learning, politics, commerce—is hardly manifest of Tokyo, the Japanese capital, so clearly as to establish the city in the true or fancied position of authority and prestige over the rest of the country, which Paris, in a marked degree, assumes in France; and London, with slighter claims, usurps in England. France has shown clearly enough that dangers may occur to the state from an exaggeration of the 'metropolitan' sense of the capital, with the attendant effects of a too great reverence for its example, or a too great antagonism to its pretensions, in the country at large. None of the dangers to the nation's unity of feeling and identity of aim, which might be implied by the assumption by the Japanese capital of this distinct and separate place in the Japanese polity, have as yet appeared to mar with the jars of internal rivalries the splendid concord of the nation.

There is, indeed, a 'rural Japan,' and there are great Japanese cities besides Tokyo, the capital, but there is scarcely a 'rural mind' or a 'rural opinion,' and the large centres of population in the provinces, like Osaka and Kyoto, with peculiar distinctions and special interests of their own, unassailable by any ambitious effort of the capital, scarcely envy Tokyo its title. Tokyo, in fact, has not yet acquired—nor

could it well acquire under present conditions—that compendious character, representative of every national activity and every national interest, which might place it in a dictatorial position in the commonwealth with results unfavourable at any rate to the ideal unison of the State. Even in respect of its dialects, Japan preserves the general appearance of a national ‘understanding,’ for, though the colloquial language varies in its usages in different parts of the country, a native of one province can hardly fail to understand or to be understood by his fellow-countryman of any other, a respect—unimportant, no doubt, but not without significance—in which possibly the Japanese is distinguished from all the great political communities of Europe.

With all this reality of national concord and homogeneity—based on a profound identity of national sentiment—Japanese society nevertheless still preserves some appearance of diversity, not, in truth, wholly superficial. It is as if Japan wished to strike a chord to the ear of the world and a discord to its own. There are three ‘official’ classes—nobility, gentry, and people—but the ‘unofficial’ discriminations are perhaps more evident and more real than these. They arise from the uneradicated instincts born and confirmed of the hard and unyielding preferences of the quasi-caste order of Japanese society under the five-century-old feudal system which disappeared by enactment thirty years ago. The Japanese sense usually refuses a real or pretended obeisance to ‘titles’ as such, yet no nation in the world accepts with equal patience the intimate paternalism of its official class. Nor is there perhaps any civilised people which has more to unlearn of the conventional prejudices and prepossessions attaching to occupations. The merchant or trader is still some-



what contemptible in Japan, and an official career—be it that of a police constable—is the great goal of vaulting ambition.

Thus, with a powerfully cohesive sentiment of nationality, in the indulgence and expression of which all classes meet, as upon the level of a powerful and general emotion—all individuals seeming there to lose even the sense of individuality—there is yet a certain immobility in the mind and in the outlook of Japanese classes. All divisions and differences disappear when the nation worships at the altar of patriotism; the Emperor occupies so lofty a station that in his presence his subjects, high and low, insensibly accept and profess the same degree of honour, which is merely that of being his subjects. Yet when the question is one not touching his ineffable supremacy, some of the narrowness of religious sectarianism is apt to appear in the relations of classes. Throughout the whole country and among all classes there is a pronounced aptitude for coteries. From statesmen to tradesmen the Japanese are marked by the instinct for the discovery of identity of interests and opinions, and a sequent predilection manifests itself for cohering in small corporations with trivial reasons of being. Similarly, there is some tendency to preserve the purely ideal barriers remaining from the thought and the habit of a former order of society. The farmer class to this day conceives itself a more honourable and, therefore, more exclusive division of society than that of the artisans, and the latter remember that in the Japan of a former time they were admitted to a greater degree of consideration than the trading class. If, indeed, it be true, as doubtless it is true, that the nation as a whole is fully informed of the meaning and effect of the revolutionary changes of recent

years, it is no less certain that inherited habits of thought do not disappear with the disappearance of regulations which have for centuries fostered and encouraged them. So, in Japan, some of the prejudices, usages, and traditions peculiar to a sectional order of society survive to-day, when every unit of the same society knows that the era of a new order is already a generation old. Five or six centuries, as one might expect, count for more than a generation, even in Japan. So much, indeed, it is necessary to accept in explanation of numerous instances that might be quoted of adherence to old modes and fidelity to sectional instincts. In relation to the social polity this adherence and fidelity may fairly be referred to an immobility of habit and thought tending to preserve some of the reality of the old quasi-caste system, the formalities of which are, nevertheless, irrevocably discarded. The bank manager in Japan is still, beneath the surface, a Samurai ; and the son of a Japanese tradesman may scarcely yet aspire to the distinctions of a place in the official hierarchy.

The future of the Japanese social state may be said to be in some degree confused by the dubious and unsteady light of present conditions. For it is difficult to identify the permanent and the transient factors in the existing equilibrium of social forces. Yet a guarantee of fundamental stability throughout whatever fluctuations of feeling and opinion and prejudice may disturb the mind of the nation in the future, seems to be offered by the unanimous and uncompromising adhesion to a conception of the Emperor's function and place, which maintains him in an authority that more resembles the spiritual jurisdiction of the representative of a supernatural power than the merely secular influence of a political sovereignty. Freed from the control of this

conception, the several members of Japanese society might threaten the confusion of a congeries of physical elements suddenly deprived of the restraint of their common centre of gravity. All interests, all factions, all classes, consent to all things that have, or that seem to have, the sanction of the imperial assent. The very state sometimes seems to dissemble its inherent or spontaneous power of organisation, as if such power were nothing but the Emperor's consent to its exercise. It seems sometimes as if it were not truly the communal instinct upon which the Japanese state subsists as a political organisation. The state is, as it were, a semi-ecclesiastical fabric, one of the symbols of a creed, whose authority, whose existence indeed, is derived from the Emperor, its spiritual and secular head. Let the Emperor lose his sacrosanct attributes, or repudiate his pseudo-spiritual authority, and a situation is imaginable in which the Japanese state might cease to be a state.

The family is the social unit in Japan, and the state itself is in truth a family hierarchy. Deprived of its head it is almost impossible to conceive of its members—its peasantry, its urban class, and its ruling caste—as any longer an organisation, that is, as any longer a state. Assured, as to all appearance it is assured, of the continuance of the imperial headship, it is almost impossible to conceive it, even amid all the quick procession of revisions and reforms of the modern Japanese era, as occupying any but the first place among contemporary polities, in respect of unity, power of cohesive action, identity of sentiment, and consciousness of nationality.

## VI

### THE POLITICAL STATE OF THE TIME

It has been indicated that, if considered as a movement of reform, the so-called 'Westernisation' of Japan has been, and in process still is, a reform from above. The natural order of fundamental political change, as understood in Europe, is here reversed, and the true deduction is invited that, in fact, the process of change in Japan is not fundamental in the ordinary sense. Whether everything that would be inferred of a movement of the same magnitude and effect in Europe should be held as affected by the fact of the unnatural order of the process of the movement in Japan—whether, for instance, we should augur inevitable failure instead of certain success for Japanese representative political institutions, because what we in Europe regard as the first condition of their success, a popular origin and popular support, is wanting in Japan—is a question that may arise in its proper place. Such questions are not to be answered of necessity in accord with the apparent premises. They are, perhaps, the particular problem of the Japan of to-day, viewed as a definitive political fact.

Where the leaders of the movement of reform in Japan have found nothing to reform they have, as a

rule, thought fit to create. They have, that is to say, adopted or imported numerous European institutions. Some they have refused, others they have rejected upon trial. It may be doubted if there is one that the leaders of the movement have not examined for some suspected utility.

At the most forward point of effective progress which it has reached to-day, the modern movement in Japan offers for inspection a system of representative or constitutional government. As the crown of the new state structure this should apparently be the most complete, if not the most efficient exemplification of the movement. In one respect this may be said of Japanese parliamentary institutions; in others it may not. The model is complete; it has all the parts; it is skilfully jointed, and its action is to all appearance regular and harmonious.

Japan followed the constitutional example of the West in adopting the somewhat illogical usage of two deliberative chambers. They date from 1889. The House of Representatives is elected by the nation on a very restricted franchise—there are about 1,000,000 voters in a population of 48,000,000. The Upper House has hereditary members, members nominated for life by the Emperor, and representatives of districts, chosen by the men of large substance in each from among their number. Parliament and parliamentary practice rest upon the articles and the authority of a written Constitution, modelled by its author, Marquis Ito, primarily on that of Prussia, but drawn in some particulars more after the letter or the precedents of the Constitutions of Great Britain and France. By the letter of the written constitution the Emperor retains a preponderating share of the powers of state.

‘The sovereign power of reigning over and of governing the state,’ says Marquis Ito,<sup>1</sup> ‘is inherited by the Emperor from his ancestors, and by him bequeathed to his posterity. All the different legislative, as well as executive powers of state, by means of which he reigns over the country and governs the people, are united in this most exalted personage.’ The Parliament, or, as it is called, the Imperial Diet, by the letter of the Constitution, has plenary competence in respect of legislation, but this competence is defined as that of consent rather than that of control. ‘It takes part in legislation,’ says Marquis Ito,<sup>2</sup> ‘but has no share in the sovereign power; it has power to deliberate upon laws, but none to determine them.’ ‘The Diet,’ it is repeatedly said by the same high authority, ‘represents the people.’ Finance is subject to the review of both Houses. The administrative power is apportioned among departments of state with their chiefs, the Ministers of State, responsible to the Emperor rather than to the Diet. ‘In our Constitution,’ Marquis Ito says, ‘the following conclusions have been arrived at: first, that the Ministers of State are charged with the duty of giving advice to the Emperor, which is their proper function, and that they are not held responsible on his behalf; second, that Ministers are directly responsible to the Emperor and indirectly so to the people; third, that it is the sovereign and not the people who decides as to the responsibility of Ministers, because the sovereign possesses the rights of sovereignty of the state; fourth, that the responsibility of Ministers is a political one, and has no relation to criminal or civil responsibility; nor can it conflict therewith; nor can the one affect

<sup>1</sup> *Commentaries on the Constitution.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

the other.' There is a Cabinet, but it has no place or recognition in the written Constitution. There is a Privy Council, the members of which, under the fifty-sixth article, 'shall deliberate upon important matters of state when they have been consulted by the Emperor.' The Judiciary, with functions and powers set forth in the written Constitution, resembles that of France in its machinery and practice.

Here, then, is the model of a constitutional *régime*, complete, skilfully jointed, and to all appearance regular and harmonious in its legislative and administrative action. The great Japanese movement of reform from above has brought into being a mechanism of rule and administration outwardly as just, as equitable, as satisfactory, as might be desiderated from the only truly natural order of reform—the process, as we of Europe know it, from the bottom upwards, from the roots and the foundations of the polity, where, of course, the causes of all political phenomena are ultimately to be sought.

In actual fact government in Japan has but a formal resemblance to the constitutional model; the creation of true constitutional and parliamentary precedents has scarcely begun. Every weighty decision of policy, every unprecedented administrative act, proceeds from an entirely informal council of statesmen, now well known to the world as the Elder Statesmen, who may or may not be members of the Cabinet of the time, whose acts or advice, whose very position, are beyond challenge or review by members of either House of the Diet, who, while filling a more responsible place and duty than any body of their contemporaries of the world at large, are yet formally responsible only to their own conscience, their own wisdom, and their own

patriotism. It is true that their position seems to be legalised or regularised by the fact of Privy Council membership, for the Privy Council, under the Constitution, 'deliberates upon important matters of state when it is consulted by the Emperor.' It was in the spring of 1903 that Marquis Ito, the chief of the Elder Statesmen, having already been four times official Prime Minister, and already at another time President of the Privy Council, resigned the leadership of his own political party to become again, at the call of the Emperor,—inspired possibly by himself,—a member of the Privy Council, in order that, in that situation, free from the entanglements of an amorphous party system, free also from that liability for the formation of a parliamentary government which his command of a party majority should seem, under true constitutional usage, to impose on him—it was in this situation and with this record behind him, that Marquis Ito in 1903 resigned his party leadership to respond to a rescript of the Emperor calling upon him to fill an advisory position—that, practically, of unofficial Prime Minister—as member of the Privy Council, which, in fact, he has filled for many years, whether as official Prime Minister, as chief of the Elder Statesmen, or as mere politician. The severance of Marquis Ito from party ties, implied by this incident, merely represented an attempt by the Emperor—doubtless upon Marquis Ito's own advice—to simplify an extremely complicated situation, of which the last thing that might be said is that it was, or is, a true constitutional situation. The Emperor called the three leading Elder Statesmen—Marquis Ito, Marquis Yamagata, and Count Matsukata—to the Privy Council apparently in order that, under the seal of their patent as privy councillors, they might seem to



do more legally and more regularly than which they had done for many years under the seal of their high capacity for statesmanship. In the result nothing is changed. The official cabinet government continues; its members are the Ministers of State; the Diet reviews and questions its administration; an array of parties seems to menace it with threats of their disapproval, or seems to seduce it with promises of their support. Constitutional forms are, as far as possible, respected, and the Elder Statesmen direct policy and manage affairs as privy councillors under the presidency of the Emperor—who thus covers them with the mantle of his power—and with occasional consultation with the parliamentary cabinet—which thus sanctions them with the authority of its forms. There is a shadow of government by the people, and of respect for the Constitution that is supposed to represent them, but good government is achieved in despite of, almost in defiance of, both people and Constitution. The system is a system of the moment, a system of the conditions of an epoch of change, of an era of reform from above. The leaders of the movement of reform have constructed, and imposed upon the State, a fair model of constitutional government, whose action is regular enough though it is only in fact borrowed, as it were, for purposes of exhibition, from another, the real engine of State.

This anomalous and unreal constitutional *régime*, having for its essential support and driving power the wisdom and experience—the guidance and rule, that is—of a wholly unconstitutional, or, at any rate, wholly irresponsible and unrepresentative council of elders, presides over and supervises, with the official cabinet—the Ministers of State—as intermediaries, a bureaucratic system, the heads of which, at least, are men of high

capacity and of thoroughly modern education. Comparatively free in truth from the beneficial restraints and disciplines which are in Europe associated with the fact of popular control and criticism, the Japanese departmental system is nevertheless organised on a thoroughly modern administrative basis. And it achieves enlightened administration with a success the uniformity of which is broken only and mainly by occasional instances of ignorance of precedents and conventions, occurring because the precedents and conventions have not been imported from Europe with the system.

In national affairs there is thus the fortunate reality of good government mainly contrived by an unconstitutional power which at present accepts it as part of its obligatory function to keep a somewhat unreal constitutional system in operation, because the system has been solemnly adopted by it as a feature—perhaps the chief feature—of an enormous undertaking of modern reform. The certain thing that may be said of this *régime* is that its future is bound to be unlike its past. The mere efflux of time must dispose of its elements of unreality were it only because they are incapable of resisting the pressure of the law of the conservation of political energy.

There is some appearance of the same superfluous duality in the system of local government. Provincial Assemblies date from 1878, but there are also provincial governors, appointed from the capital, and responsible to the central administration in Tokyo. The governors, besides possessing the prestige and authority of lineal descent from the traditional institutions of Japan's pre-modern era, are vested in large powers of reference and revision over the administration of the popularly elected

bodies. The function of the representative Assemblies is, in theory, and to a certain extent in practice, advisory, *vis-à-vis* the Governor as representing the central authority in Tokyo. Ratification by the Governor, or the chief of the Department of Home Affairs in Tokyo, is necessary for all Acts of the Assemblies, and the prorogation or suspension of the elective bodies is within the competence of Governor or Home Minister. Yet, as the Governor wields his executive authority under a statutory obligation to consult with a permanent committee or council of the Assembly, it is hardly possible for him to ignore the opinion and the feeling of the representative bodies, and the Assemblies themselves have the right of appeal to the Home Department past the decision of Governors.

A system practically identical with that already in operation in the provincial departments was inaugurated in cities, towns, and villages in 1888. In the cities mayors, nominated from Tokyo from among three candidates selected by the Assemblies, wield nearly the same powers as the Governors of provinces, under a similar obligation of reference to a council or committee of the Assemblies. The towns have mayors elected by the Assemblies, and in the villages the 'headman' of the small communities of feudal Japan has survived as the natural chief of the somewhat informal body of elders, to which a concession of consultative rights in matters of local concern is usually made by the higher and more regular authority represented by the provincial government.

Local government, notwithstanding the apparent anomalies of its description as such, is smooth and efficient. It does not indeed fully realise Western ideas of district autonomy, and difficulties—occurring from the collision of the people's growing sense of local and

individual right with the obligation imposed on them of recognising the presence and respecting the prestige of the representatives of the imperial authority—have not been unknown. Yet it may certainly be said that Japanese local government, by contrast with the parliamentary *régime*, is already a rounded, consistent, and efficient model, unburdened with the fictions and unconfused by the factors of chaos, which, for the time being at any rate, clog the present operation and cloud the future evolution of the parliamentary *régime*.

To form an approximately correct notion of the Japanese political state of to-day it is, above all things, necessary constantly to recall that distinction which has already been emphasised, and will of necessity be repeatedly emphasised, in this volume—the distinction as to status, method, and habit of thought between the ruling class and the mass of the people. Perhaps it is especially in the realm of the nation's political consciousness that the distinction becomes a vitally operative fact. The total purport and effect of the quasi-constitutional *régime*, and the total method of the quasi-autonomous system in the administration of the provinces and cities, are profoundly modified by the saliency of the position, the prestige, and the real power and capacity of the strictly official class. The facts will fall to be displayed or analysed in a variety of relations in subsequent papers. In the Japanese political state they must be employed in correlation with such facts as that there is no real political opinion—educated or instinctive—among the mass of the people; and that therefore the government of the time cannot and does not derive its mandate or its inspiration for important acts and decisions of policy, mainly or even slightly, from the 'colour' or tendency of that public opinion which, in the West, is recognised

as the master factor in the play of forces in a constitutional economy. There is universal indifference to and ignorance of political 'ideas' and principles among the mass of the people, who do not even demur to their exclusion from franchise rights. There is, too, a universal inclination to defer to the advice, or to repose upon the aid, of the official administration—local or imperial—in undertakings which, in a constitutional state of the West, would be, as they are, uniformly left to the initiative of individuals or of individual corporations. This, of course, is but the reverse aspect of that characteristic of indifference and ignorance which the mass of the nation displays with regard to political ideas and principles: the people, in ordinary circumstances, cannot or do not presume to challenge the administration of their leaders, therefore in emergencies they rely upon the support or the counsel of their officials. No visitor to Japan fails to observe the extraordinary measure of authority wielded by officials, and the docile disposition of the people in the acceptance of this authority. This is not to be referred to, or explained, by the presumption of a nation incapable of public spirit and private character. The facts are incidental to the time, or, as it might be said, illustrative of the stage at which the Japanese modern era—regarded as a sublime experiment—is arrived. Their psychological significance or ultimate causation need not be discussed here. A single historical reference is perhaps necessary: the pre-eminence of the ruling or official class and the insignificance of the nation's capacity for political, or other, initiative, denote the survival of the effects of the minute, particular, almost providential despotism which, as has been seen, characterised administrative method under the feudal polity that disappeared but thirty years ago.

One political result of these peculiar conditions is admirable. The national leaders in Japan have been, and still are, unfettered in their enormous enterprise of reform and reconstruction by an unwilling or recalcitrant public opinion. Their intelligence and loyalty are assurance against the possible abuse of their unique freedom, even were they not, by a peculiar safeguard, which might almost be called a happy accident, under a continuing necessity of reference to the authority of the Emperor. The Emperor—his sacrosanctity and autocracy—is the only fixed political idea in the mind of the mass of the people, and were this idea not already an accepted axiom in the political science of the leaders, the people, curiously enough, are so strong in their conviction of it as to compel the leaders' subscription to it, if need were.

Official recognition of the religious hierarchies of Japan does not now go further than the bestowal of a certain measure of support on some of the great shrines or temples of the Shinto cult—as, for instance, the premier shrine of Ise, sacred to the divine progenitors of the Imperial family, the repository of the most precious emblem of the Imperial regalia, and the venerated image of the nation's identity. Apart from the ideas specially associated with the concept of the Emperor's divinity and divine descent, and the nearly related cult of ancestor-worship—whose pretensions to rank as a religion in the Western sense will be afterwards discussed—it may be said of all religion in the Japan of to-day that it is an appanage of the national consciousness rather than—as may be said of its status and function among Western peoples—the spirit itself of that consciousness. In the polity of the country it is unimportant. Deprived of visible and invisible

representations of religion, modern Japan, so far as its effective political powers and potentialities are concerned, would be little if at all different from what it is. Of political ecclesiasticism, in the true sense, there is none. The idea of national or individual responsibility towards the concepts and the implications of an inviolable religious canon is nowhere found. If the character of a religion be denied to the nation's ideas about their Emperor and their ancestors—a position which, as I propose to show, is not wholly admissible—the Japanese political state is, by such denial, deprived of all ecclesiastical character, and, of necessity, must be viewed as a state stripped of all that huge and profoundly significant appurtenance which, either from the implied admission of moral obligations to a religious canon, or from the actual erection of politico-ecclesiastical fabrics, expands the mere bulk, as it increases the obvious responsibilities and pre-occupations, of the political states of the West. The modern Japanese state polity must be regarded as non-religious and non-ecclesiastical, even if, the head of the state being in a sense the only divinity recognised by the nation, it might from one point of view be set down as the only theocratic state of the time.

In the absence of an educated public opinion, as of a religion truly embodying or representing a national conscience, a certain measure of importance as a political force has to be allowed to the modern newspaper press of Japan. The best journals of the country, able, self-respecting, and responsible, are, like the political leaders, too far ahead of the political knowledge and capacity of the nation to be representative. On the other hand, in the few instances in which they adhere to a consistent ideal of independence, they tend to furnish a partial counterpoise to the great power of the political leaders,

since they certainly represent the latent capacity of the mass of the people for criticism and self-assertion—a capacity not greatly developed so far, yet apt to appear in curious, and sometimes embarrassing popular ebullitions. Of the larger number of Japanese journals, however, it must be said that they reflect many of the faults of conduct and judgment which might be expected of the spokesmen of a society in process of introduction to political conceptions and moral ideas—momentous in themselves—with which its experience is wholly unfamiliar.

Always, in any consideration or examination of the Japanese political state of the time, there emerge, as the true pillars of the State, the figures of the leaders, who either have ministered at the birth of the modern era or nurtured and tended it to a healthy, and yet, as it might be put, to a highly strung adolescence. They are the pillars of the State of the time, and their intelligence and capacity are the rock of its foundation.



## VII

### ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONS

JAPANESE national administration—the administrative economy and administrative conditions—exhibits features peculiar to itself, though commonly they are but the corollary of the peculiar conditions of the time. The most important of the special conditions of the time is the status—immensely salient, yet masked or dissembled by the still more salient and peculiar status of the Emperor as head of the State—of the ruling class, in a polity that professes to be, and in some shape is, the polity of a constitutional State. The causes and the purport of the pre-eminence in the State of what may be properly named a small and exclusive oligarchy need not be elaborately elucidated here. It is perhaps sufficient at present to point out that the members of this oligarchy are the successors or survivors of the coterie of statesmen and soldiers with whom, as has been shown in a previous chapter, the modern era had its genesis. They are, that is to say, the political fathers of modern Japan, and of every modern institution—including the Constitution itself—in the country. It is also true that the tradition of a despotism—the despotism of the Shogunate system, which came to an end only thirty-five years

ago—remains deeply impressed—as, after centuries of usage it was bound to be deeply impressed—in the political habit of the nation. The secure and efficient operation of the Japanese Constitution—the ultimate success of the whole modern era, indeed—waits upon the education of the Japanese people out of and away from the deep-seated instincts induced by the traditional despotism of the Shogunate era. Until this education is complete it is manifest that the authors of the modern era—setting aside the obvious difficulty of the prestige accruing to them merely from their achievements as the authors of the modern era—must continue to fill a vitally important function in the political state.

No very close analogy might be drawn between the method and administration of the Japanese ruling class and that of Western States, whatever resemblances there may be in point of status. In all the leading Western States we are familiarised with certain features of administration which are not beheld as abuses only because they are apparently inevitable and permanent. Closely scrutinised, there is not a single European State whose ruling class assumes or usurps the functions of government from motives absolutely just or absolutely pure. In England, for example, we regard it as natural, or, at least, as unavoidable, that men should ‘enter’ politics, as it is said, with a variety of motives, among which the one pure or just motive—a conscientious desire to serve the interest and promote the honour of the State—need only be inferred. We know, and we are in a measure content, that men should seek distinction, or social prestige, ‘distraction,’ intellectual exercise, power, or even—in the prospect of ‘office’—emolument, while concurrently they no doubt serve the

public or State interest to the best of their ability. We thus contemplate, without astonishment or uneasiness, a political class which—without consciousness of dereliction of duty, much less of positive wrong—make of politics an instrument to minister as much to individualistic or egoistic aims as to the service of the State. The political ‘salon’ has always been an influential institution in France. It has sister types in Germany and in Russia; while in Great Britain the serious business of politics, for the large majority of the politicians, is decorated with the fascinations of a luxurious, refined, and æsthetic ‘season.’ In these conditions it is sometimes difficult to discern where the interest of the State emerges—as the paramount pre-occupation of the politicians—from the intellectual, Sybaritic, egoistic interest of the individual, and if, in truth, we have an ensemble of interests and activities which may truly depict the consummation of a highly refined civilisation, it is certain that motives inevitably tend to be confused or vitiated by a variety of engaging ‘distractions,’ amid which the State’s interest is even liable to be lost. Politics take on the aspect of an art when they are discussed and dealt with as if they were a philosophy, and to surround them with a glittering appurtenance of luxury and refinement is to remove them to a sphere which the people—the ultimate concern of all politics—feel to be altogether separate from their existence. An evil condition thus occurs in which the nation either falls away from a close and direct interest in their politics, or begins to feel that the art of politics is an esoteric affair requiring a subtlety of mind and a dexterity of hand of which they are hopelessly incapable. These phenomena are to be observed in contemporary Europe,

where, in spite of the fact that the average political enlightenment of the people is much greater than the Japanese can pretend to, States are, in fact, much less homogeneous and much less capable of united purpose—and thus less capable of political progress—than is Japan.

By comparison with the politics of the States of Europe, closely identified as these are with the intellectual and æsthetic 'interests,' the politics of Japan—the administrative *ménage* and atmosphere—must indeed seem narrow, dry, and arid. To a member of the political 'circle' of Paris or London, Tokyo would appear a desert place. The fundamental reason, doubtless, is that the present is an era of first principles in Japan, the era when a few hard and inexorable rules are in constant use for the resolution of very obvious problems, the time when first principles are apt to disappear in a cloud of sophisms being yet distant. Because Japanese political leaders are dealing with a situation whose leading difficulties are too obvious to admit of much disputation, and certainly of no refinement; because, in a word, their duty is perfectly clear, therefore administrative conditions are simple, and perhaps, to the Western sense, uninteresting. Problems that belong to a long-past era of British or French or American history are being dealt with in Japan on principles whose efficacy was of necessity exhausted in Europe generations ago. On the other hand, because the Japanese leaders are endeavouring—successfully endeavouring—to resolve these problems in a tithe of the time consumed in their solution in the past politics of European States, there are methods and results in Japanese administration which are often unique and always curious. Moreover, the effect of this differentiation must be prospective

as well as retrospective. If Japan has accomplished in a generation of the past that which has occupied us for a century, she is likely to put as much into a decade of the future as we may put into fifty years.

Primarily, then, because it is an era of first principles, the configuration of the Japanese administrative and political economy is unlike that of European States. In England, in France, in Germany, in America, we see the head of the State as a member of the *régime* of the time, with a greater or less measure of actual political prerogative at his disposal. He is always the head of the social order, and we hear much of him in his social activities. He is always human, and a 'personality' with whose leading characteristics we are familiar. Sometimes, through his prestige, he stamps an epoch with the impress of his character. If that be vile, the instinct of his people may repudiate him; if it be good, the people may thank God for him and strew roses of honourable adoration in his path. Always he is one of them, though somewhat above or below them. When he is dead he is consumed of worms, like the rest of us.

All this is very different from the Japanese situation. The Japanese Emperor is not merely above the people and their politics and social life; he is, as it were, outside of them, dwelling in a region apart, mysterious perhaps, certainly dim and impenetrable to their eyes, if they presumed to be curious. His character, his affections, his daily life, his diversions, are unknown to them. Not a word appears in the public journals as to the details of his life. The record does not go beyond an intimation of his reception of his Ministers or of foreign personages, or his infrequent excursions outside the walls of the palace in Tokyo. In brief, he is to the Japanese people, without question, what the mytho-

logy that introduces their history affirms him to be—a mysterious divinity.

His position suits with the conditions of the time, and greatly assists the actual wielders of political power—the leading statesmen—in dealing with the difficulties of the time, for if a policy be clearly good and desirable they have but to invoke his approval to make it an accomplished fact.

In the actual political record the Emperor's ostensible responsibility is scarcely more than that of summoning and presiding over the informal and unconstitutional council of Elder Statesmen which stands at the back of the Cabinet of the day, and is in fact the real executive of the time. The Emperor also opens the Diet in state, and every constitutional difficulty or deadlock may be resolved by recourse to his extraordinary authority, an expedient which, however, is naturally used only as the last in a process of exhaustion, since to invoke his authority for the solution of every petty constitutional crisis would be to vulgarise it.<sup>1</sup> In the theory of the Constitution, as has already been shown, he retains a greatly preponderating share of power, but in fact it may be said of the Emperor rather that he occupies in the temple of the State the niche of a mystical, majestic image of the national identity of Japan, than that he claims the eyes of the nation by his deportment and activities as one of the human dispensers of the rituals of the temple.

<sup>1</sup> A notable instance of the use of the Emperor's unique prerogative in a constitutional difficulty appears in the records of the parliamentary session of 1901. Marquis Ito, then Premier, had his financial proposals implacably opposed by the House of Peers. After a prolonged crisis Marquis Ito procured an Imperial Ordinance directing the Peers to approve his proposals, and they were instantly passed. But the act was severely criticised, and mainly, perhaps, on the ground that it brought the Emperor too palpably into view as a feature of the *régime*—in other words, as a human sovereign!

Because—among other reasons—the political leaders are human, like the people, they live and move much nearer the people than the ruling coteries in European States, even if, as creators or sponsors of the modern era and its institutions, they are in a much more emphatic sense necessary to the people and to the country than the statesmen of European polities. As was pointed out in a former chapter, an emperor who is a divinity of necessity diminishes the importance of men who are merely human, however great their work. Consequently, one does not find in Japan much evidence of that fine reverence for towering achievement and consummate genius which is deemed the appropriate reward of great effort or the just recognition of splendid gifts in Western States. The licence of Japanese press discussion of the characters and the acts of great personages—excepting always, of course, the Imperial family—would be incredible to the understanding and abhorrent to the taste of the general body of Western peoples. This is a sign that though, in fact, the chasm between leaders and people in Japan is on one side wide and deep, on another it does not exist. The people are always ready to remind their leaders that they are merely human like themselves, though, indeed, they may know, like the rest of the world, that the work of their leaders has been so extraordinary as almost to seem superhuman.

The 'sphere' of politics, as exemplified in Tokyo, is not, as has been said, decorated with the exquisite embroideries of the art-interest, or the social, the dramatic, and literary interests. The Emperor is too far removed from the plane of affairs to come down to the vulgar duty of fostering or presiding over 'society.' Therefore, but for a ball on the Imperial

birthday—at which the Emperor does not appear ; a ‘garden-party’ at the ‘viewing’ of the autumn chrysanthemums—at which the Emperor moves about in imperial loneliness ; or a military parade, or an official dinner, there is no real social or ‘society’ interest contiguous to the sphere of politics, inviting the protagonists of the latter to relax their exhausted energies, or seducing them to a neglect of their obvious duties. And ‘society’—in the exclusive, semi-aristocratic significance of the word—being practically unknown as an institution, dominated by royalty, or as a sphere of ‘distraction’ open to politicians—art, literature, drama, music—which, as spheres of intellectual interest, are, in the leading European States, more or less united or identified with the sphere of politics through the agency of ‘society,’ as an institution and as an idea—are not, in Japan, ante-rooms, so to speak, of the forum of politics. The theatre is still, in fact, eschewed by the Japanese upper classes, as it was in former eras ; music does not exist, and art and literature are, for the time being, as national or class ‘interests’ overwhelmed in the tremendous significance of the problems of what is, in a sense, the most extraordinary political and social cataclysm in history. Moreover, it is to be observed that wealth—the *raison* or the cause of luxury—is no passport to political or indeed to high social consideration in Japan. Marquis Ito is, relatively, a poor man—a few thousand pounds would probably represent his private ‘fortune’—yet he is the most powerful Japanese personality of the day. The State itself is a poor one financially, and its leading servants lack the means, even if they had the desire, to surround the conduct of its affairs with a golden halo of æsthetic interests, which at the same time would inevitably be the exclusive interests



of the wealth that is able to command or to subsidise them.

Politics—administration and legislation—are treated strictly as a business—the business of the country. Amid such conditions, simple and unadorned even to aridity, it is impossible for sophisms to assume the disguise of principles, and statesmen do not linger to provide against exceptions while obvious rules wait to be applied for the removal of clamorous difficulties. It is the simplicity—the obviousness—of their path, and their untrammelled prerogative to proceed in it—untrammelled because they have themselves ‘pioneered’ the path—assisted always by consummate wisdom and devoted patriotism—these are some of the conditions that have enabled Japanese administrators to record their marvellous successes. It may be perceived how greatly the conditions differ from the circumstances prevailing in the political arenas of European States.

The problems of Japanese administration and legislation have been till now glaringly apparent in the contrast of the condition of a country only thirty years removed from feudalism with the best conditions in the leading polities of that Western civilisation to the task of absorbing which the country is committed. Where the task of a ruling class is the gradual consummation of a vast effort of reform from above, it is obvious that there will be slight temptation to wander into philosophical by-paths in political discussion, and small scope for the exploitation of purely dilettantist maxims in actual administration. The mountain of political work to be done is too great for men to pause in salons over the entertaining task of illuminating its features with epigrams and aphorisms. The era of epigrams in politics is nearly always a time

of decadence, and of all the States of the world the Japanese is probably least afflicted with that itch of aphorism which has been the malady, especially and peculiarly, perhaps, of French politics. The state of political affairs in Japan is too primitive to permit politicians to offer aphorisms as their contribution to the solution of problems. Hard head-work and laborious spade-work are greatly in demand.

The divine pre-eminence of the Emperor, the constant inclination of the people, through their press, to remind them of their humanity, and their own fervent patriotism—these various factors conspire to banish the purely personal interest from among the motives of the ruling class. From the evils of jealousies and rivalries in high places, characteristic of many Western States, Japanese administration is well-nigh free. It is difficult to say which of the three influences named as contributing to secure this boon for Japanese administration is most powerful. In presence of a divine Emperor all human ambition must seem to be at once futile and impertinent, and, on the other hand, the political problems and difficulties of the time, as they are large, evident, and clamorous, inevitably demand the service of a self-abnegating patriotism. When the need of the State is great even a slight intrusion of the personal or selfish motive into the aims of leaders serves to stigmatise their patriotism. The Japanese leaders accordingly sink their personalities in the interest of the State.<sup>1</sup> The same spirit does not indeed pervade the whole of the political arena. In the lower ranks of the politicians the dominating motive un-

<sup>1</sup> To strangers it is almost amusing to observe the consistency and fervency with which Japanese statesmen reiterate the ascription of their achievements 'to the illustrious virtues of the Emperor.' They are both sincere and insincere, true and deceitful, in this ascription.

questionably is self-interest—self-interest of the meanest kind, stooping to the vulgarest devices, offering the most unworthy sacrifices to compass its ends ; but even here this is largely a fault of irresponsibility, and the selfish motive is usually one of gain rather than of ambition or of distinction. Moreover, the Japanese member of parliament is almost a negligible quantity in the present balance of political forces in the State. He has little importance as a party man because party government is not in force, and he has little dignity as a representative of public opinion, because there is no educated public opinion in the country ; yet the most venal of the lower-grade politicians is always ready to immolate his personal preferences and pretensions in the presence of a critical emergency. The voice of the Japanese party politician—at other times loud and strident—was stilled, as it were in the silence of death, in presence of the momentous crisis in the country's relations with Russia.

Again, then, there emerges, as the most significant of facts, in the Japan of to-day, the group of political leaders who are the fathers of the modern era. They are the real administration and executive of the time. Because a divine Emperor may not too closely identify himself with mundane affairs, and because the vast proportions of their past labours for the State overshadow the constitutional institutions whose creation has been part of that work,—for these reasons, from these causes, the administration of affairs is, to all intents, in the hands of a small coterie of statesmen who, because the nation recognises their Emperor as the one truly venerable political fact, are yet required to use the Emperor's approval as the seal of their every act.

In ordinary, or even extraordinary times, executive and legislative acts—except such as the Diet itself, in the exercise of its constitutional powers, may propose for its own adoption—originate, or are made to seem to originate, with the official Cabinet, but in fact, as has already been said, no grave decision is taken, no important policy is inaugurated, without reference to the Elder Statesmen. Legislation is a much less onerous part of the total function of government than in the comparatively venerable State systems of Europe. As the statute books of the Japanese realm are but fifteen years old, a great deal has to be done in a short time in order that the modern State may as speedily as possible be supplied with a sufficiently voluminous body of statute law. Programmes of legislation that would be the incredible record of half a dozen parliamentary sessions in Europe, are disposed of by the Japanese Diet in a single session of three months. In such circumstances, the creation or inauguration of new laws is not weighted with the significance and responsibility which, in fact, make legislation a function of Western government at least equally onerous with administration. Legislative experiments are lightly undertaken in Japan and as lightly abandoned, and no serious injury results to the prestige of government, for, in a certain sense, the whole modern era is an experiment, and the real desideratum of the time is not the scope of the experiment, but the spirit in which it is undertaken and the methods by which it is regulated and conducted. On the one hand the Diet, conscious of its comparative unimportance in the State during the domination of an oligarchy of elders, is liable to engage its energies with multitudinous and sometimes eccentric legislation, and thus fails to create a tradition of responsi-

bility in its acts and deliberations. On the other, the oligarchy is sometimes tempted in its consciousness of great and preponderating authority to use the latter on draconian principles which, if incidentally efficacious for the end immediately in view, are sometimes proven by the event to be inferior statesmanship.

For the time being the methods of the rulers are of supreme importance in Japanese administration, and not, as in the constitutional states of the West, the justice, moderation, or enlightenment of that public opinion which in Western States is the reference and appeal, and very often the inspiration, of rulers and the dictator of policy. In other words, the fact of the pre-eminence of the Japanese leaders in the Japanese State has its corollary in the virtual dependence of the State upon their wisdom and experience as realised in the administrative methods and models adopted at their instance. In European States principles and policy are the pre-occupation of statesmen; in Japan method and procedure furnish the paramount problems. Japanese statesmen are great civil servants rather than profound politicians. The era, in brief, is still one of first principles too obvious to be disputed, too clear to admit of much difference of opinion.

Method, then, is the crux of administration in Japan and the true problem of Japanese domestic politics. Necessarily so, indeed, if only from the circumstance that modern political Japan is still what it has been for three or four decades past—a huge effort of reform from above. The time has not come when the Japanese leaders might recline upon banks of asphodel and contemplate the harmonious revolutions of a constitutional machine running smoothly almost in spite of the politicians. Questions of method lie at the root of

most of the political problems in the Japan of to-day ; there is little dispute as to the nature of the problems to be solved. It is possible that questions of method are the primary questions of all political problems. Japan may show us that method, not principle, is the true secret of civilised progress.

In pursuance of the plan of a universal reform from above, inspired by their self-immolating patriotism, guided by their fund of native wisdom, the Japanese leaders, as the real administration behind every successive Cabinet, and above all public opinion—which in Japan tacitly allows its own incompetence for the trying tasks of the time—the Japanese leaders discern and accept the duty of a world-wide search for the best examples of administrative method and practice.

This search, and the application of its results, is in one sense the whole story of the modern era, the secret of its success and—in its continuance—the guarantee of its future. The Japanese leaders inaugurated the modern era by calling in experts from abroad. The leeway to be recovered against the most advanced modern States was so great that to recover it quickly the leaders in effect turned over the State to these experts, each representing a comparatively high standard of modern method. The foreign experts did the pioneer work of reconstruction ; they represented, as it were, a wholesale importation of modern method—the foundation of the new State fabric. To-day the Japanese leaders build upon this foundation more and more through native experts. The search for the best examples of method continues—it is still accepted as one of the most important duties of administration—but it becomes more and more discriminating and

eclectic with the progress of the State in the principles and practice of the adoptive civilisation.

The while a vexatious struggle goes on for the resolution of the difficulties of a peculiar and in many respects anomalous constitutional situation, the State, through the adherence of its statesmen to a practice which is already almost a tradition—the practice, namely, of a world-wide search for the best in administrative method—the State, the interest of the State, benefits from standards of efficiency which the smoothest and most successful constitutional government might not secure to it. It is a curious and unwonted spectacle that is witnessed in Japan—a nation ignorant and incapable of the first principles of modern politics, served as to its national interests by statesmen who, without reference to the people, their ultimate constituents, govern by modes and methods selected from the experience and the practice of every great polity save their own.

The Japanese Government in execution of its master administrative aim—efficiency of method—subsidises native intellect. Year by year it selects the most promising students at the national universities, pays the expense of their residence for a period at the best centres of education in Europe or America, and acquires in return a lien over their minds, their special training, and their accumulated knowledge, for the use and service of the State for a definite period after their return to Japan. Moreover, by the frequent despatch of special commissions of inquiry to any part of the civilised world that appears to offer beneficial lessons in administrative method, the Japanese leaders are always able to compare Japanese system and Japanese results with the best examples throughout the world. Con-

stant revision in the light of the newest theories, or the most approved practice, is thus possible in the administrative *régime*, and the major purpose of all government is thus served without delay occurring—as it often occurs in Western States—from much disputation over questions of principle or policy. As has been said, the era of such disputation is not arrived in Japanese politics, and in the meanwhile the statesmen of the realm, freed from the duty of disputing principles of policy, officiate as great civil servants rather than as profound politicians.

The actual administration being thus in truth a body of men who are great civil servants as well as political leaders and statesmen, the preponderance in the State of the administration becomes, in fact, more than political. We thus find that the scope of administration in Japan is far more comprehensive than that of any European executive. The need of the people is not only political ; it is for the time being moral, industrial, commercial—and even social. So much as this results indeed from the essential character of the modern era in Japan—its character as a scheme of universal reform, or as the displacement of one civilisation, one civilised method, by another. The administrative successors of the small group of statesmen who inaugurated the era have to undertake an administrative function which covers the whole conscious activity of the nation. In another aspect their function is comprehensive, or nearly universal, because the function of the feudal despotism that preceded them was comprehensive or nearly universal. It is not in a generation that a nation, for centuries accustomed to a providential despotism, can learn to walk its own way, or even to think its own thoughts.



Thus Japanese administration, in addition to its search for and importation of the most approved methods in rule and government—a search which is but the logical continuance of the scheme of universal reform from above, connoting the whole intent of the modern era—undertakes the introduction of new industries; subsidises the efforts of private capitalists to the same end;<sup>1</sup> operates monopolies of its own; supervises local government and individual enterprise to a degree that would not be possible in the West, and might not be acceptable if it were; includes the inculcation of morals in the scheme of national education; interferes in the social life of the people as censor of manners and morals; ignores, if it see fit, the decision of the representative House, and, in general, admits obligations of deference only to the conscience, the patriotism, and the wisdom of its directing spirits, the national leaders, or to the wish of the Emperor, usually expressed according to the prompting of the national leaders.

The inevitable inference of such a situation as between rulers and ruled is that the great function, the most onerous responsibility of Japanese administration, is the education of the people.

The national leaders—the administration—through the ignorance and indifference of the people as to questions of principle and policy, are preserved from the embarrassment of an obstructive or fluctuating public opinion, and public policy deviates little from a given course, both because this given course is obvious and because the men by whom it is laid and directed are

<sup>1</sup> A recent return shows that the total amount of the Government's subsidies is about £1,500,000 annually, the greater portion of which goes for the encouragement of steam navigation and shipbuilding.

not distracted by clamour and criticism—influential or irresponsible. Yet a Constitution—itsself part of the scheme of universal reform introduced by the leaders—of necessity invites a certain deference even from its creators. The leaders defer to it by educating the people in the hope and prospect of the people being able ultimately to use the Constitution without damaging the State.

While, then, Japanese administration maintains an efficient and modern State system by accepting much more than a merely political function in the State, it must necessarily seek to consummate the modern era by educating the people, as it were, to take the place of the administration. Questions of education, the case of Japan would seem to show, precede questions of method, and questions of method are antecedent to questions of principle or policy. For the Japanese people the modern Japanese era is an era of education ; for Japanese administration it is one of method ; in the future it may come to be one of principle or policy for the nation at large.

## VIII

### THE NATION OF TO-DAY

THE Japanese, though their achievement is already great, are physically a small people. The average stature of the males of the race is about that of European women, and Japanese women are slighter than the men in the proportion of European women to European men.<sup>1</sup> Domestic habit and the physical conditions of urban and rural life, as they differ in essential respects from the custom and practice of Western peoples, prepare different results in the physical history of the people. Sanitation is comparatively primitive, but, on the other hand, the Japanese climate is probably both a better prophylactic and a speedier restorative than the average climate of Western Europe. It certainly permits a nearer approximation, throughout the year, to the open-air habit which nowa-

<sup>1</sup> That the physique of the Japanese is improving, at any rate in point of stature, seems to be conclusively shown by the results of the observations of Captain Nakamura, a conscription service examiner, over a period of ten years, ending in 1902. These, as recently published in a Japanese journal, show, for example, that the number of conscripts measuring over 5.2 shaku (5 ft.  $1\frac{7}{16}$  in.) in 1892 was 42 in every 100, whereas in 1902 the number was 44 in every 100. The number below this standard was 52 in 1902, as against 58 in 1892. 'The average height of the adult male Japanese, according to Dr. E. Baelz, the best authority on the ethnography of Japan, is 5 ft.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ins., and that of the adult female 4 ft.  $8\frac{1}{2}$  ins. The weight of the male is 150 lbs. in the lower orders, and from 140 to 145 lbs. in the upper; the women weigh from 122 to 125 lbs.' (Captain Brinkley's *Japan*, vol. v.).

days seems to be more and more recognised as a preservative instinct of the natural man.

The centre of the nation's physical gravity is nearer the bottom of society than we are wont to look for it in Western communities. The lower classes are better built, and they are stronger and healthier than the grades above them. That traditional esteem of physical activity, for its own sake more or less, which so well subserves the end of maintaining a high physical standard among the upper classes in England, the while it has a possible disadvantage of diverting their energies from more serious pursuits, is not part of the inherited instinct of the class of the well-to-do in Japan. It seems also that the Japanese dietary, with rice as its constant and invariable staple, suits better with the toil and exertion of the working classes than with the exclusively mental activities of the commercial class, while it accords worst of all with the habit of the class whose norm of activity, whether of mind or body, is smallest. In the Japanese community the coolie class—dock-labourers, carters, jinrikisha-pullers, navvies, and so on—is very noticeably the most muscular and the most robust. In the ranks of this class it is easy to find men whose physique satisfies the highest standards. They are excellently proportioned, as well as 'hard' and 'tough.' Physically, indeed, they probably constitute a stronger and more solid base for the fabric of society than any proletariat of Europe. Among those sections of the people which are not by necessity mulct in the pains or benefited by the disciplines of bodily toil, and who do not advantage themselves of its uses by voluntary exercise, the Japanese student class well exemplifies the general phenomena. An official return of 1902, covering

statistics of the physique of pupils and students of twenty-one schools, colleges, and universities, classifies only 48.8 per cent of the males as strong or thoroughly healthy; 48.1 per cent being returned as of only 'medium' health, with 3.1 as in bad health. The eyesight of 38.7 per cent was defective. Japanese publicists, it is true, frequently deplore the Japanese student's neglect of the uses of a proper physical regimen, and, in fact, educational curricula have in recent years been generally amended with a design of satisfying a broader standard of culture—physical as well as mental. Nevertheless, even a slight experience and observation of the Japanese detects but one normally robust civil class—that of the men of laborious callings at the bottom of the social scale. By the European employers of Japanese clerks in Japan due allowance is usually made for the physical disabilities of the latter, and it is a frequent comment that Europeans appear to support alike the cold of the Japanese winter and the heat of the Japanese summer better than the average Japanese of the non-labouring classes. Scientific method, enlightened administration, and the command of resources not available to the private citizen, have made a Japanese Army and Navy, the men of which, equally with the material, must command the respect and admiration of the world. In fact, however, the units of the services, in point of physique, health, and power of endurance, are not representative of the nation. They are the cream of the nation's manhood, fed, housed, and trained under conditions which, from the poverty of the country and the imperious behest of social usage and tradition, are not possible outside the official establishments. Even a law of conscription, selecting for the services the best bone and sinew the

country can afford without any hindrance, save from the chances of the lot, in a recent year drew a thousand recruits from a ward of Tokyo, the capital, who averaged but  $7\frac{1}{2}$  stones in weight. Out of so meagre a substance the army system evolves a fighting unit which, with its appropriate training and equipment and its innate soul of patriotism, is now perhaps unsurpassed in the world. But the army system does not penetrate the narrow alleys of Japanese cities, nor hold beneficial sway under the roof-tree of the Japanese peasant. Toil and a sufficient diet of rice and fish often indeed furnish an equally efficient discipline for the labouring classes, but as one rises in the Japanese social scale one does not, as in Europe, necessarily encounter an increasing aptitude for health-giving activities or an increasing command of the means of indulging them. Jinrikisha coolies, for example, often earn twice as much as the average member of the teaching profession in Japan. The latter is condemned to a double physical servitude. His calling fails to guarantee to him the benefits of involuntary activity, and his wage almost forbids any adequate experiment or attempt contemplating the adjustment of the balance between an overtaxed mental organisation and a neglected physical system. The same may be said almost universally of the commercial class, and throughout the population, with a few notably exceptional groups, there is no intuitive impetus towards the half-nervous, half-lustful debauch of physical activity which is especially the indulgence of the Anglo-Saxon race among Western peoples. Usually it may be said that where the body is duly and adequately cultivated in Japan, the motive is derived from the necessity of toil, from official direction, or from the stipulations of an educational curriculum.

The race is not indolent. It merely fails as yet to appreciate the value of physical exercise for its own sake.<sup>1</sup>

It is, perhaps, chiefly by these conditions that the comparatively low standard of health among the Japanese is explicable. Yet the death-rate—not always, of course, an accurate criterion of the general health conditions—is no more than 21 or 22 per 1000 annually, against 18 or 19 per 1000 in the United Kingdom, and 28 per 1000 in Europe. The vitality of the race, if the scope and magnitude of its industrial and commercial activities may be accepted as a measure, is not subject to the same deductions as is that of the leading peoples of the West. Marquis Ito, in a speech to an assemblage of Europeans upon his return from a visit to Europe and America a year or two ago, spoke with special emphasis of the ‘intensity’ of life as he had seen it in the Occident. He is used to the contemplation of the quieter and more equable pulsations of the Japanese social and commercial economy. Consumption is a prevalent malady. The special conditions of the Japanese bathing habit are sometimes held to assist its ravages, and the airy construction of Japanese houses is also accused, but probably a more important contributory cause is the low average of vitality induced by the general conditions. Chest diseases account for about a fifth of the total deaths. Diseases of the digestive organs, encouraged probably, as before indicated, by a dietary not wholly suited to the prevailing

<sup>1</sup> Much has been heard lately of the Japanese so-called ‘system of physical culture’—*Jujutsu*. This is not a system of physical culture, but rather a system or set of principles of self-defence. The proportion of Japanese who are adepts in it is perhaps less than the proportion of scientific boxers in Anglo-Saxon communities. Physical exercises, much like those adopted in our own schools, are now part of the curricula of all Japanese schools.

habit of the people, are a still larger proportion of the total.

A recurring subject of comment in Japan is the generally accepted fact of the earlier maturity and the speedier decay of the Japanese by comparison with Europeans. The preternatural acumen and intelligence, usually allowed by Europeans to be characteristic of the youth of the country, denote an aphelion of mental vigour at an age—at or under twenty-five—when a European youth may still expect a large access of mental power from future physiological development. ‘The general opinion,’ says a Japanese journal, ‘is that in this respect Japanese differ very essentially from normal Europeans and Americans, and the truth seems to be that up to the age of twenty the Japanese lad develops much more rapidly than the European, but from the age of thirty development is infinitely slower in the case of the Japanese.’ ‘Ordinarily,’ says a high Japanese authority, ‘physical development continues to about the age of twenty-three.’ Undoubtedly the Japanese intellect tends to be clear rather than profound, analytic or discerning rather than comprehensive, and in this character it meets the admitted physiological phenomena. Yet if men of years, who are practically or usefully vigorous, are more rarely met in Japan than in the West, there are very notable examples which seem to oppose a theory of early decay among the Japanese. The now world-famous Elder Statesmen of Japan compose a group of intelligences as keen and subtle as those at the helm of affairs in any other contemporary State, and they are the intelligences of a coterie of men not one of whom is under sixty years of age.

Possibly the truth is, that under European con-



ditions the processes of the physiological, and also thereby of the mental, development of the Japanese would tend to become identical with those that appear in the case of Europeans. The Elder Statesmen of Japan, though doubtless exceptional in other respects, have throughout their lives been subject to an exceptional necessity of modifying their Japanese habit by adhesion to European methods in the history alike of their mental and physical organisations. Perhaps this is why they are parallel examples to the elderly statesmanship of Europe, rather than representatives of the position and power of elders in the Japanese commercial and industrial *ménage*.

On the general question Dr. Takaki Kenkan, an earnest promoter of the physical improvement of his countrymen, lately wrote: 'There is in all countries a close connection between national greatness and physical development. The French are not, as a people, so robust as the Germans. The Anglo-Saxons are, as a race, better developed than any of their rivals, and hence it is that they predominate everywhere and in all things. But when we come to examine the physical status of the Japanese and the Chinese we find that it is very low. In view of the conditions among us as to health of mind and body, we cannot but be conscious that most of our people are still back in the feudal ages.'

The Japanese are multiplying probably in a greater ratio than any nation whose numbers receive no augmentation from immigration. The race does not appear to be more prolific than the contemporary peoples of Europe, but marriage is the unexceptional experience of adults, and while it takes place at a much earlier age than the European average, the desire or inclination to

repudiate its obligations, which is alleged to be manifest in Western Europe and America, does not seem to emerge as a fact from the Japanese statistics. The birth-rate has been well maintained in recent years at between 32 and 33 per 1000 annually, and as there is almost no loss through permanent emigration abroad, the census totals receive the full benefit of the margin between the death-rate and birth-rate, now amounting to about half a million souls annually. Compared with Great Britain, there is a difference of four or five units in the percentage alike of births and deaths, that of Japan being the higher in both cases. While among the Japanese the expectation of life after maturity seems to be smaller than in Great Britain, the social and climatic conditions, as they appear to conspire to encourage a quicker maturity, likewise guarantee a larger average of survivals from the special dangers of infancy and childhood than is revealed by the statistics for Great Britain.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the outstanding fact in the vital records of the Japanese at the present time, in relation to prevailing conditions in Europe, is the larger possibility of improvement that emerges in a study of Japanese conditions. Less robust the Japanese certainly are

<sup>1</sup> The estimated population of Japan proper (excluding Formosa) in 1906 is 48,500,000. In 1901 the total deaths were 932,087 and the births 1,386,981—the margin of births against deaths being thus nearly 455,000. Japanese vital statistics show a remarkable proportion of still-births. These are as much as between 80 and 90 per 1000 births year after year. In France and Germany the ratio of still-births from 1885 to 1895 was about 37 and 50 per 1000 respectively. On the other hand, the general birth-rate is steadily increasing in Japan and steadily decreasing in Western Europe. The natural increase of the population of Japan in recent years has been about 12.0 per 1000 annually. From 1890 to 1895 it was 11.3 per 1000 in the United Kingdom, 13.0 in Germany, and 14.5 in Russia (Mullhall), but the actual increase in each of the three European countries named is much less than the natural, through losses from emigration. In the ten years ending 1893 the infant mortality yearly per thousand deaths was (up to one year old), 146 in England; 168 in France; 208 in Prussia; and 132 in Japan.

than the best of the Western races, but they are at least equally fertile with any Western people, and they are, of course, liable to conserve their special advantages, climatic and social, with the continuing improvement of the general conditions.

A foreign investigator records the following observations: 'At the present rate of increase the population of Japan will double in sixty years. No further evidence is needed to prove that the Japanese are a very prolific people, whose inherent capacity for increase has in no wise been diminished by two centuries and a half of seclusion. Indeed, it requires but a short sojourn in the country to be thoroughly convinced that Japan is among the foremost nations of the world in this respect. The economical yet convenient customs of the mass of the people in the care of their young, their healthful out-of-door life in most parts of the country, the age at which many children join their parents in productive occupations, their strong family attachments, making it difficult for any one with family connections to be in absolute destitution, their simple standards of living—all go to show that the Japanese are a prolific race, not only because the birth-rate is moderately high, but also because the death-rate is low. It may be confidently affirmed that they have racial qualities which fit them to engage in the competitive struggles of the world. They cannot be classed in any way with those races which seem to dissipate in the presence of a different or more aggressive civilisation.'<sup>1</sup>

While the truth of some of these remarks is relative only to Japan's Asiatic environment, and while the writer could scarcely have pretended to survey the total incidence of the industrial and sociological conditions

<sup>1</sup> *Asiatic Society Transactions*, vol. xxii.

modifying his deductions, his general conclusion may be accepted. The Japanese are not among the physically decadent peoples, nor is the race one of those which, from mere failure to maintain the stream of their national life, seem doomed to lose their power of resistance to the pressure of the modern world-struggle.

A prominent Japanese anatomist, Dr. Taguchi Kazuyoshi, recently announced the results of an investigation (as far as possible comparative) of the weight of Japanese brains. These appear, on the whole, to support the inferences that might be drawn from the general physical data. Dr. Taguchi may be quoted : 'According to the investigations of Bergman in Europe,' he says, 'the difference in the weight of a man's brain and a woman's ranges from 100 grammes to 184 grammes. And the average weight of the brains of young Hanoverians, given by Bergman, is 1372 grammes for young men and 1272 for young women. Another writer gives the European average as 1353 for youths and 1226 for girls. The Japanese average, which I have reached after examining the heads of young people ranging from three years to twenty, is for males 1135 grammes and for females 912 grammes. Taking men and women between the ages of twenty and eighty, as the result of the examination of 374 cases I found that for men 1790 grammes was the heaviest and 1063 the lightest, giving an average of 1367 grammes. With females the heaviest weight reached among 150 cases was 1432 grammes and the lightest 961, giving an average of 1214 grammes. The difference between males and females was 153 grammes, pretty much the same as in Europe.'

## IX

### THE INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL ECONOMY

JAPAN is among the poorest of the considerable States of the world. The simpler standards of life and the greater value of money enhance the country's absolute status in the material elements of power, but even after these proper additions to her wealth are allowed, Japan must still be regarded as rich only in expectations. The most usual statement of the national wealth by Japanese and other authorities estimates it at about a tenth of that of the United Kingdom, and perhaps a fifteenth of that of the United States.

A recent estimate of the national wealth by the Bank of Japan is as follows: Land, £701,000,000; Mines, £40,000,000; Cattle, £8,000,000; Buildings, £190,000,000; Furniture, £40,000,000; Railways and Electric Tramways, £35,000,000; Shipping (including warships), £25,000,000; Bullion, £20,000,000; Industrial Manufactories, £30,000,000; and property of various descriptions, £80,000,000; making a total of £1,169,000,000, or somewhat over £25 per head of a population of 48,000,000.

A Japanese financial writer puts the *per capita*

wealth of the country at £28 against the £234 of the United States and the £303 of Great Britain. The income *per capita* is estimated by the same writer at £3 : 10s. for Japan, at £44 : 10s. for the United States, and at £36 : 10s. for Great Britain. Such comparisons and conclusions are to some extent futile when there is a wide difference of economic conditions and radical dissimilarity of public and private economic practice. Such difference and dissimilarity occur as between Japan and most of the great Western States, rendering it impossible to draw a parallel more than approximately just between Japanese circumstances and European standards.

These circumstances seem, in terms of money, to be far inferior to those prevailing among the leading communities of the West, but it is much to be doubted whether, for example, the measure of comfort among the people is less if estimated from the standpoint of Japanese domestic habit and usage. Possibly, indeed, it is greater; it is certain that if cheerfulness and freedom from the pains of actual need be evidences of comfort, the Japanese poor need not envy even the higher grades of the industrial class of Europe. Economic values are appreciating year by year in Japan with the progressive movement of the time. Artisans are better paid, but they pay more for the means of life. A police report of a few years ago on the living conditions among a section—not the lowest, but corresponding rather to the class of unskilled or partially skilled workers in the ‘east-ends’ of our own large cities—of the population of Osaka, the great manufacturing city of Japan, displays the facts as follows: ‘The average number of individuals to a family varied from three among fish-dealers to eight

among wharfingers. [The average for all Japan is rather over five.] As to the average earnings of heads of families, carpenters stood at the head of the list with 56.3 sen (1s. 2d.) per day, and fish-dealers at the bottom with 18.3 sen ( $4\frac{1}{2}$ d.) per day. The average for all callings represented was 33.6 sen ( $8\frac{1}{2}$ d.) per day. The earnings of members of families, other than heads, began at 3.3 sen ( $\frac{3}{4}$ d.) per day for tobacco workers; the highest being the 20 sen (5d.) of carpenters. The average total earnings of all the junior members of families taken together was 11.3 sen, making, with the 33.6 sen earned by the heads, 44.9 sen (1s.) in all for each family.' A Japanese comment on the report remarks that it is indicative of conditions as to income among the lower classes of Osaka, the population of which is about one million, and adds—'Considered even by itself, and more so if it be taken in relation to the average wage of common (elementary) school teachers and members of the constabulary, the report discloses an earning power which is not so despicable.'

The upward movement in wages has had the general effect in recent years of improving the status of the labouring classes, despite the collateral increase in prices. The rise in prices has in fact followed and not anticipated the increase in the wage-earning capacity of the workers, the general result being to permit the worker to dispose of a margin of his earnings, perhaps only slightly, yet still appreciably greater than he was able to handle a decade ago, less or more. In 1904 carpenters earned 1s. 3d. per day against 9d. in 1896; stone masons, 1s. 6d. against 10d.; lacquerers, 10d. against  $7\frac{1}{2}$ d.; weavers (male),  $8\frac{1}{2}$ d. against 5d., and so on. In the same period, among 'necessaries,' foreign sugar advanced about 15 per cent in price, charcoal about

50 per cent, cotton cloth 10 per cent, and kerosene oil 10 per cent; one or two staple commodities falling slightly in the same period. There is no doubt that the savings of the working classes, and therefore also the wealth of the country at large, under normal conditions, continue to expand. As yet, however, the paucity of the accumulated reserve—the savings and investments in fact—of the Japanese people fully establishes the truth of their poverty, absolute and relative. It may, indeed, be correct to assume that, if the working classes of the country are able to surround themselves with a measure of comfort relatively equal to that which is enjoyed by the working classes of contemporary Western States, upon a wage of from five shillings to eight shillings per week, against a European mean of, say, from fifteen to thirty-five shillings, the unit of industry in Japan is not less competent for all the tasks and tests of modern competitive conditions than the industrial unit of Europe. The income of the Japanese worker may be only a third or a fifth of that of the European industrial, but for all the salient purposes of life it is three times or five times as valuable. It is in a comparison of the financial reserve of the respective units that the Japanese industrial loses some of his apparent equality of capacity for the struggle, and by parity of reasoning it is an obvious truism to say of Japan as a whole that the struggle—commercial, industrial, and political—would be infinitely more trying for her if the theatre of her activities were nearer Europe—her great rival even in her own markets—than it is. The immensely important advantage of Japan's unique situation at the very doors of her political and commercial opportunity, to a large degree counterbalances the enormous disadvantage of poverty



under which she labours. It is not the smallness of her income of which Japan can complain. That is adequate to her present simple habits and her modest standards of life. Her difficulty is the meagreness of her capital resources.

‘Even in the home country,’ says Captain Brinkley,<sup>1</sup> a sympathetic judge, ‘the development of many promising enterprises is delayed for lack of funds. Everything is on a petty scale. There is not throughout the length and breadth of the land a factory or a tradal organisation that would be counted of even mediocre importance in America or England. Seventy per cent of the nation’s school-age children receive instruction, yet the total sum annually expended on this education is not twice the yearly income of one of the great colleges of the United States. The aggregate capital invested in all the banks, industrial, commercial, insurance, shipping, and agricultural companies throughout the Empire is less than the fortune of a Rockefeller or a Vanderbilt.’

Japan is thus as yet very poor in the visible means of achieving riches. The *matériel* of her industries—buildings, machinery, equipment—is almost always meagre and impoverished, their organisation and general economy defective, and the methods of employers and employed often primitive and wasteful.<sup>2</sup> Capital is lacking for the improvement of the *matériel*; it is needed for the education of modern methods. The whirl of the spinning-wheel and the jar of the hand-

<sup>1</sup> *Japan*, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> ‘A visit to Japanese factories often shows machinery treated carelessly, employés so numerous that they impede rather than expedite business, and a general lack of the precision, regularity, and earnestness that characterise successful industrial enterprise in Europe and America’ (Captain Brinkley, *Japan*). The facts are discussed more fully, and in their general bearing, in a later part of this volume.

loom are familiar notes of the little clamours of Japanese hamlets. The establishments of capital are not yet strong enough or large enough even to aim at the exclusive supply of the needs of the market from the factory stores.

The latest returns, for the year 1904, show Japan's capitalistic fabric to be composed as follows: Commercial, industrial, transportation, and agricultural companies, 8913, with a total authorised capital of £126,200,000, and £93,130,000 paid up; banks, 2227, with a total authorised capital of £51,600,000, and paid up, £37,300,000; railway companies (recently nationalised), authorised capital £27,000,000, paid up £21,500,000.

In 1904 the number of factories of all kinds was 9234, employing 207,951 males and 318,264 females, a total of 526,215 workers. Silk continues to be Japan's premier manufactured product. Of raw silk there was produced in 1904 some 9800 tons, of which over nine and a quarter million sterling's worth was exported. Of silk and other piece goods £13,000,000 worth was manufactured. The porcelain and earthenware manufacture was valued at £725,000; lacquered ware, £450,000; matches, £1,180,000 (value exported, £1,036,000); paper, Japanese and foreign, £2,300,000; straw matting, £700,000 (£500,000 worth exported). Other important manufactures are saké (rice beer), of which 144,600,000 gallons were produced in 1904, and £245,000 worth was exported; European beer, 3,800,000 gallons (£70,000 worth exported); soy (native sauce), 70,000,000 gallons; and sugar and waste silk. There were 74 cotton mills in 1904, representing £3,500,000 capital, and 1,300,000 spindles in daily use. The cotton yarn export in 1902 was nearly

£2,900,000 worth, and of partially or wholly manufactured cotton goods about three-quarters of a million sterling's worth was sold abroad.

Japan's status in manufactures is still comparatively so low, her means of improving it—her free capital resources—still comparatively so meagre, and her technical and organising skill still comparatively so insufficient, that her great mainstay in the battle of material potencies is still and must for some time be her agriculture. After the liquor taxes, the tax on land is the principal source of State revenue. About two-thirds of the cultivated area (the cultivable area is about one-tenth of the whole superficies of Japan, a very mountainous country) is farmed by peasant proprietors, the remaining third by tenant farmers.<sup>1</sup>

Chief among the agricultural products is rice, the staple of the national diet. The Japanese lower classes are unable to eat their own 'best quality' rice, because it is too valuable. They export it—to Australia, Europe, America—and buy with the proceeds inferior qualities from China, Korea, India. The annual rice harvest ranges, as the season is favourable or otherwise, from 160,000,000 bushels, worth about £40,000,000, to 220,000,000 or 230,000,000 bushels, of the value of about £50,000,000, the value per unit of measure falling, of course, with the greater abundance of the harvest. From 90,000,000 to 100,000,000 bushels of barley are yearly harvested, and beans and millet are the other important grains. Owing to the competition chiefly of

<sup>1</sup> The *Nippon* (Tokyo) in September 1897 gave 5,518,040 agricultural families, 3,121,075 of which farmed their own land. The proportion of freeholders to tenant farmers has much diminished in recent years. The land tax is, practically speaking, the Japanese agriculturist's rent, when he is proprietor, paid to the Government, which came into possession of the great estates of the Daimyo when the latter surrendered all their traditional rights to the restored Government of the Mikado, and thus made modern Japan possible.

the Indian and Ceylon leaf, the export of Japanese tea has much decreased in recent years. From fifty-five to sixty million lbs. has been the average crop in recent years, equal to £1,700,000, or £2,000,000 at Japanese prices.

Mining has in recent years made important progress in Japan, and a recently reported discovery of an extensive gold mine (estimated to be worth £100,000,000) should greatly enhance the value of the industry as a national asset. In 1904 92,000 ounces of gold were mined, and over 2,000,000 ounces of silver, while of copper, in which 'line' Japan possesses what is said to be the largest mine in the world, over 30,000 tons were produced. Lead, iron, antimony, manganese, sulphur, petroleum, and coal—of the last over 10,000,000 tons were brought to the surface in 1904—are also 'visible,' and already extensively exploited. Much remains to be done, however, in investigation of the mineral resources of the country and in improving methods in existing mining enterprises.<sup>1</sup>

Japan has now (1904-1905) 4693 miles of State and privately owned railway lines open to traffic. The aggregate capital of the privately owned lines is £27,000,000, of which £21,600,000 is paid up.<sup>2</sup> One or two of the lines are well managed; many of them

<sup>1</sup> The manager of the mining department of the Mitsui firm, a great Japanese commercial corporation, was recently quoted by a Japanese journal as having said to its representative: 'To get efficiency requires the remodelling of the tone of the whole mining world, for our mining business is a mere superficial imitation of that in the West. The colliery business, as at present conducted, does not differ much from mere speculation and gambling. Of business morality there is none at all, and though the miners are relatively excellent, and discharge their duties in a manner fairly proportioned to their wage, the supply of competent and reliable overseers is exceedingly limited. This lack of competent overseers is the gravest obstacle standing in the way of the development of the mining industry in Japan, especially coal-mining.'

<sup>2</sup> Since this was written the State has taken over the whole of the privately owned railways.

execrably. Speed is not, as a rule, their affectation, but most of them pay handsomely, the Japanese being great travellers. The mercantile marine in 1905 included 1977 steamers of 939,594 gross tonnage, and 4121 sailing-vessels, with a gross tonnage of 336,496, excluding junks. Among the steamers there were 24 of over 5000 tons. The gross tonnage of steamers and sailing-vessels has more than trebled since 1893.

Japanese seas abound with fish, and the fishing industry ranks much higher in relative economic importance in a country which is little more than launched on a general manufacturing career than in the great States of the West. About a million families are directly or indirectly dependent on the industry. The value of the fish taken in 1904 was £4,200,000, nearly double the figures for 1895. The manufactured products (principally dried fish) were valued at £3,170,000 in 1904. The industry has in recent years had its due share of the fostering care and encouragement of a paternal government, and the development, in particular, of deep-sea fishing is likely to add considerably to the national resources.

Throughout the commercial and industrial system there are inevitable traces of hasty establishment and inexpert service. Private banks are scarcely a generation old in the country; crowds of them sprang, mushroom-like, from the rich soil of a great industrial and commercial 'boom' following the successful war with China ten years ago. With a nominal capital of no more than a few thousand pounds in many instances, they subsist in the midst of a false and inflated situation by playing on the cupidity of the wage-earning classes, wholly uninformed as to the true conditions of economic prosperity and the natural and proper relation of profits

to capital. Rates of from 8 to 12 and 15 per cent, or even higher, are offered to depositors by many of these concerns, and the ignorance of the Japanese masses as to the true meaning of these inducements puts considerable sums of money at their disposal, while every unfavourable fluctuation of the economic situation is apt to celebrate a local collapse which, in truth, usually proves to have little or no educative effect. These are phenomena of which it may perhaps be said that they are the inevitable results of an excessive haste in the creation of a modern commercial and industrial economy, as they are also proof of a mind in operations of finance which, in the compass of its attempts, tends to exceed the restraints of its judgment ; a mind which is incompletely informed as to data, and incompletely trained as to experience.

The poverty of her capital resources, the meanness of her manufacturing *ménage*, and her ignorance of the laws of the conservation of labour energy, and even her comparative lack of technical skill, need not, however, in the case of Japan, peculiar as it is, represent an ascertained incompetence for great industrial achievement or for the responsibilities of a large commercial policy. Present conditions and present phenomena are the conditions and phenomena of an industrial and commercial order which has as yet passed through only the very earliest of those stages of development, of specialisation, and of organisation which already lie in a very extended series along the historical perspective of the industrial orders of Europe. The history of the Japanese economic fabric in its modern shape and form is only begun.

The primary measure of Japan's comparative industrial capacity is the cost and value of Japanese

labour. That it is cheap has been shown. Its abundance is assured with a population of 48,000,000, in which the proportion of individuals not under obligation to work for their daily sustenance is infinitesimal. Its value is an obscurer question. Rated by its competence to live within the limit of its meagre earning its value is relatively high. Post Office Savings Banks in 1904 held a sum of £4,122,000, for 4,900,000 depositors. The Japanese industrial is nowadays able to control a fair margin of his earnings, and it is clear that in its application to the more technical, more intricate, and more expensive manufacturing undertakings of Japan's recent industrial history, his labour has not lost but gained in value to himself, and the improvement in his standard of living has not been so great as to reduce the margin between his receipts and his payments. Undoubtedly, then, the value of Japanese labour is increasing to the labourer himself and to the country, for the Japanese export tables in the last decade show phenomenal expansion of the output for foreign markets of many commodities which must for Japan be a specially remunerative trade, because they are staple products of the much dearer labour of Europe.

## X

### SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

THE Japanese do not view marriage as the corner-stone of their fabric of society, and thus in its sociological aspect it has not the vital pertinence allowed to it in the Occident. The premises being different it is improper to derive conclusions which the same facts would invite under the prior conditions accepted in Europe. The solidity and strength of Japanese society do not in fact at all rest upon the sanctity or absoluteness of the marriage relationship. One might not indeed be very wide of the truth in affirming that marriage is accepted as an incident—inevitable, yet still incidental—in the history of families rather than as the mainspring of their existence, or as the source of their validity in the social record. The stream of the nation's life merely passes through the marriage relation; it is hardly conceived as arising in it. It is necessary to keep these conditions in view for the proper qualification of the inferences which, from the Western point of view, are apt to be drawn from the facts as to Japanese marriage, and the Japanese attitude towards it denoted by the facts.

Marriage is universally *de convenance* in Japan. The principals are brought together after inquiry by representatives of the families of both parties. Usually



neither is known to the other—neither indeed may have seen the other—before the first meeting following the inquiries and proposals exchanged by the families. No religious sanction is necessary, formally or conventionally, in the actual ceremony of marriage. The status of the woman, as betrothed or as wife, is subordinate. The man alone represents the family interest, which dominates every other motive underlying the transaction. Broadly speaking, it may be said that marriage is the universal life experience of both sexes, but the scope of this generalisation should embrace the results of a social usage which permits the man after marriage to maintain an irregular relationship with one or more women—often installed in his own house—besides his wedded wife. The law recognises but one wife, but convention offers no particular objection to more than one. A general laxity of morals is not, however, a legitimate inference from this statement of the facts. There is, probably, less chastity in the habit of men and women in Japan than we are accustomed to postulate of the practice of Western peoples, but it would be incorrect to say that the moral standard is lower among Japanese women; and if it may be affirmed that the moral standards of the Japanese people are in the absolute sense less rigid than ours, it should not be said that there is therefore greater social demoralisation. The marriage relationship, as the main support of the structure of our Western societies, furnishes those standards of conduct which, in the degree of our loyalty to them, appear to guarantee the stability of the structure. In Japan the marriage relation is no longer so vitally salient an institution, and it is not from it or from a canon of conduct evolved mainly from its responsibilities and privileges that the vitally salient

institutes of conduct proceed. The moral pivot of the social cosmos is not here found in the manner or the matter of the sex relationship. Accordingly it is hardly possible—it is, in fact, a blunder—to estimate the moral strength or moral principle of the Japanese social state upon a basis of values derived from the habit of the Japanese in the sex relationship, or from their attitude, in marriage or otherwise, towards it. Assuredly, indeed, upon these terms the count must go heavily against Japan, if only upon the single article of the Japanese husband's conventional and legal freedom from obligations imposed upon the wife alike by convention and the law. Misconduct, even the gravest and most flagrant, is no ground of divorce against the husband. The mere caprice of the husband is sometimes a sufficient ground of divorce against the wife. And divorce is, in fact, extravagantly common, the proportion being one to three marriages annually, or one to four or five in the better years.<sup>1</sup> But the status of the marriage relationship must always modify the apparent significance of the statistics, and the observations just made perhaps sufficiently indicate the sense and the degree of the difference of status as the relationship is viewed in Japan and in the West.

For the rest, it may perhaps be said that Japanese marriages, while they last, are commonly happy enough. Possibly, as the relation lacks some of the character of irrevocableness with which it has been invested in the West, its trials tend to be more lightly borne, and its total effect of happiness thereby possibly augmented. Few observers fail to conclude, indeed, that the signs of

<sup>1</sup> In 1899 there were 297,428 marriages and 66,626 divorces; in 1900 the figures were 345,158 and 63,773 respectively. There has been steady improvement in recent years.

content and good-will are more numerous in Japanese homes, and in the country at large, than in the *milieu* of the harsher judgments and perhaps more pharisaic professions of our Western systems.

The marrying age is from twenty to twenty-five for men and from seventeen to twenty for women. Child betrothals, comprehending a mutual understanding between the respective parents, are common, but child-marriage is not a Japanese institution.

The social ethic, which, as the truly potent agency in the conservation of the fabric of Japanese society, takes the place and discharges the function of the ideas surrounding the marriage relation in Europe, is found in the Japanese view of the filial relation. Even a married man's duty and responsibility centre in obligations of respect for the wishes of living parents, or of reverence for the memory of dead ones, rather than in the discharge of his duties as husband or father. The most important article of the canon of wifely conduct is 'to live in submission to father-in-law and mother-in-law.' In the larger aspects of the State's interest the maintenance of the ethic of filial piety, as the base of the family and the social relationship, no doubt operates in a detrimental sense against the development and expression of individuality, with a resulting tendency to discourage initiative and self-reliance. Sociologically, however, it may be said to regulate a compact social formation, and to impart to Japanese society much of the appearance and not a few of the instincts of a close corporation. To its effects, possibly, may be traced the insuperable difficulties that always oppose any attempt by an alien to ingratiate himself on terms of absolute mutual confidence with the units of Japanese society.

Along with this radical difference of idea and practice

in the leading social ethic of Japan as compared with Europe a custom survives which, in its sociological pertinence, has no parallel in Occidental society. Under sanction of a custom known as *inkyō*, men, even before they have passed the meridian of life, very commonly retire from business or other activities, either in order to permit the eldest son to succeed to the responsible headship of the family, or merely to repose upon the support and relief which filial piety, in satisfaction of the promptings of its educated conscience, provides for them. The practice is discouraged by the reformed *régime* of the present day, but it receives emphatic sanction from tradition and usage. The *inkyō* custom, though probably not, as to origin, directly linked with the ethic of filial devotion, emphasises and perpetuates the effect of the latter, since the premature resignation of the powers and functions of family headship is of the nature of a reciprocal recognition by the parent of the son's fulfilment of the obligations of the filial code of conduct. Moreover, the scope of the *inkyō* custom is usually regarded as covering the possible indigence or incapacity of other members of the family besides the parents, and its sociological incidence has thus a wider application than the interest of the parent and the heir. The custom, in fact, even at the present day, in a large measure relieves the Japanese State of the expense of supporting pauperism and of caring for mental or bodily incapacity. This responsibility mainly attaches to the family, the head of which is seldom unwilling to accept it. One admirable result, universally noticeable, is that Japan, though one of the poorest of countries, perhaps exhibits fewer obtrusive evidences of poverty than any other civilised State. There are few beggars in Japan, and no work-houses; there are no victims of an absolute neglect,

and, except as it may follow upon one of the great natural disasters that frequently visit the country, there is no absolute penury. There is, indeed, an obvious reverse of this happy image—a reverse which offers a spectacle of ease and indifference, if not of sloth, in which the eager and ambitious leaders of the nation might not easily find inspiration to large and costly effort were they not always and of necessity convinced that the greatest problem of Japanese statesmanship is now, as it will for a long time continue to be, the education of the Japanese people in the things of the new Japanese era, and in its ideals.

Japan suffers in her measure from the same deleterious social disorders which are the bane of organised societies throughout the world. The unique features of the Japanese licensed system have been the object of much Western curiosity and the theme of perhaps as much ignorant Western comment. In fact its effects, in their nature and degree, are probably not very different from those of the open and unfettered exhibitions of vice in the streets of Western cities. Professional vice is not a whit more respectable in Japan than it is in Great Britain or the United States, and if the rehabilitation of its victims may be an occasional occurrence in Japan, the while it is always an impossibility in Western societies, their moral degradation is unquestionably less terrible, in the sense that it involves an attitude or habit, in the intensive sense, less pronouncedly vicious. It is certain, too, that they are more secluded from the collateral vice of drink, and from the temptations to positive crime, which drag their prototype martyrs on the other side of the world down to deeper and more hideous depths of moral ruin. It would, in fact, be correct to say that the manhood

more than the womanhood of Japan suffers in the sacrifice of a part of the latter on the altar of human frailty. The recognised and semi-official status of the institution undoubtedly countenances greater licence, and while it purports to mitigate, as it does in fact mitigate, its most direct effects, subtler and less definite, but no less injurious influences, radiate from it in a wide circle throughout Japanese society. Dissipation, on an exceptional occasion, becomes easy to men ordinarily the most correct and respectable. The vice being treated and provided for as exceptional, unavoidably assumes a character of necessity, and the manhood of the nation is prone on exceptional occasion to accept it as such. Its artificial sanctions tend to receive recognition beyond the walls of the officially licensed quarters as well as to involve other classes of women besides the inmates of these. Practically, for instance, there is only a nominal distinction between the calling of the habitués of the licensed 'quarters' and that of the geisha, though of course the status of the latter is not subject to the regulations and restrictions that reduce the former to a condition worse than that of helots. It must in justice be said that the effects—the remoter but not less insidious effects—of a system that inevitably relaxes the proper discipline of public opinion in their degree penetrate the highest as well as the lowest circles of Japanese society. Thus it is probable that if the stricter standards of Europe, from their necessitating the frequent alliance of duplicity with vice, may in effect produce instances of grosser depravity, they also, by holding aloft an image of conduct more approximately ideal, ensure high examples of social virtue which are themselves a restraining and improving influence, the while in Japan a universal tolerance seduces the man-

hood of the nation to a universal indulgence, amid which the incentives to conspicuous individual conduct are apt to disappear.

The vice of drunkenness attains in Japan nothing like the dimensions in which we are accustomed to contemplate it in most European countries. It is rare to meet a drunken man in Japanese streets, and if the national saké bill is big enough for a people relatively so poor as the Japanese, the effects of the dissipation which it seems to imply are relatively less apparent with respect alike to the *morale* of the people, their domestic comfort, and their criminal inclination. Drinking is much more an indulgence of special occasion than of habit among the Japanese. The drinking bar is unknown, away from the great seaports, and the habit of casual entertainment by partial intoxication has no social recognition. Probably, indeed, the sociological incidence of the drinking habit, so wide and penetrating in European communities, is here so small as to be negligible. It does not appear among the classified motives of capital crime, and the proportion of offences against the public peace, to which it would doubtless chiefly contribute, is relatively small in the general statistics.

An adequate comparison of the criminal statistics of Japan with those of Western States is scarcely possible, owing to disparities in the methods of criminal classification and dissimilarities in the criminal codes. It would seem, however, that the freedom of the Japanese masses from addiction to the use, or abuse, of alcohol enables Japan to claim an enviable place in tables relating to the comparative criminology of the nations. In recent years the number of persons guilty of offences against the law—criminals and misdemeanants, that is to say—has averaged about 300 yearly per 100,000 of the popula-

tion. In France, from 1889 to 1894, the yearly average of crimes and offences (excluding misdemeanours tried at the Police Courts) was 576 per 100,000 of the population. In 1898 the convictions on all charges were 581 per 100,000 in England, 839 in Ireland, and 1386 in Scotland. On the other hand, it is probable that Japan carries a criminal class at least as numerous, proportionately, as that of States of the first rank in the Occident, and the ratio of serious crime would seem to be increasing.<sup>1</sup> The number of offenders with two or more convictions at the end of each year is between 50,000 and 60,000, though in Japan, as in Europe, fluctuations in economic, climatic, and social conditions influence the statistics year by year. Germany, in 1895, had a recidivist class numbering 172,000. As to suicide Japan has an average rather than an excessive record. From 170 to 180 persons per million inhabitants take their own lives in every year. The rate in England is from 70 to 80 per million; in France it is from 200 to 210; in Germany, 210; Denmark, 250; Italy, 40 to 50. In Japan mental alienation, misfortune, disease, and love disappointments are the commoner motives. Suicide is a frequent refuge from disgrace, real or apprehended. The world lately beheld it accepted by Japanese officers and men even as their feudal forebears welcomed it—as a refuge from the real or imagined disgrace of capture by the enemy.

<sup>1</sup> The general loosening of moral restraint consequent on the revolutionary changes of the time—a subject dealt with in a later chapter—is a fact which, even in the absence of direct proof, would suggest increasing laxity of conduct.



## XI

### INDIVIDUALITY AND THE FAMILY

IF, as is sometimes held, the end of civilisation be, essentially, nothing but the free development of individuality, and the free expression of individual genius, Japan is handicapped in the race to its goals by her attachment to an opposite principle—a principle in which, possibly, might be detected the central idea, if not, perhaps, the main support, of her historical civilisation. The utilisation to their fullest extent, and up to the last hour of their efficiency, of all the powers of all the units of society, is possibly the clearest discernible aim of Western progress.

At a recent 'Commencement' at the Women's University in Tokyo, Count Okuma, speaking to the staff and students, described the 'vital principle' of the government of the lives of his countrywomen. 'Nothing,' he said, 'is so injurious to the proper regulation of a woman's life as the notion that she should have an ideal of her own to pursue. You should not accept the Western view in this matter as the rule of your life. In the West the husband and wife are the social unit; in Japan father and son constitute the family unit, and the family is the unit of society. It is an idle fancy to imagine that a

marriage constitutes a family. Under the prevailing custom in Japan this is impossible, and the decrees of that custom, whether bad or good, are to be accepted, especially by our women. A woman should not in marriage pursue any ideal contrary to the will of her parents and of the parents of her husband.'

A declaration such as this—it happens to be the pronouncement of the broadest and most liberal, though possibly not the acutest, statesman of Japan—hints the truth, that 'the position of woman' in Japan is really overlaid by a larger question, 'the position of the individual.' The question has very important bearings. If Japan should choose to retain her own definition of the society unit, and to think and to act accordingly, she opposes the prevailing tendency of all the speculative thought and most of the legislative action of the West—the tendency towards the freeing of the individual from every encumbrance of circumstance, of convention, of prejudice, hindering the free expression of his or her individual genius and capacity.

Almost necessarily, the very 'atmosphere' of the great enterprise whose definitive result is 'modern Japan' tends, and has tended, as much to discourage isolated or individual initiative as to educate a new theory of national responsibility. It is a defect of a process of reform from above that men tend to acquiesce in it rather than to be inspired by it. And from acquiescence they insensibly pass into dependence, with the result that the process fails to realise its greatest aim, a self-reliant state. In Japan, accordingly, there is a universal appeal to the State or to the nearest constituted authority. Government is penetrating, scrutinising, detailed, paternal, and the people respond by accepting it as providence. The great trunk railways of the

country are State-built, State-owned. The great shipping corporations are heavily subsidised; telephones and telegraphs have been introduced by the State; tobacco and salt production are State monopolies; harbours, piers, docks are built with the aid of State grants; vice is regulated by the State, virtue is inculcated by it. Government sends promising students abroad for education under condition of subsequent service of the State. Government organises a quinquennial industrial exhibition; it initiates new industries, and sends agents over the world to look for new markets. Individuals look to corporations, corporations to local authorities, and these to the State. 'Spring cleaning' in Japan is ordered and supervised by the local authorities; resident foreigners say, with a measure of truth in the sarcasm, that a street obstruction may not be removed without a reference to the Cabinet in Tokyo.

All this is the natural sequence, the logical extension, of a great effort by a small and exclusive oligarchy to re-create the State fabric. There are manifest advantages in the method of the enterprise. The disadvantages are almost equally obvious. One of them is illustrated in the notable absence of individual initiative in Japan.<sup>1</sup> A collateral disadvantage is that the Western theory of individual privilege and responsibility makes but slow progress. Japanese women cannot hope to achieve Western independence so long as Japanese men fail to assert or to accept it even for themselves. The absence of authoritative affirmation of the rights of the individual spells adherence to the

<sup>1</sup> It must not, of course, be forgotten that the paternalism of governing method in the Japan of to-day only carries on the tradition of the despotic method of the government of 'Old Japan.' Equally, popular incapacity for initiative in Japan is as much a habit of tradition—induced by the former despotism—as it is a deficiency perpetuated by the semi-providential methods of the government of to-day.

traditional theory of the Japanese family, a theory which, as Count Okuma shows, still holds a position almost impregnable in the most liberal Japanese minds. This theory, as clearly as possible, belongs to an order of political thought, as it arises in a course of political experience, opposite to that of the West.

It is clear that a State, such as the Japanese of the present time, in which the social unit is the family, where the social order is the family order on a national scale, will be eminently capable of united action, and pre-eminently marked by community of sentiment and opinion. On the other hand, its individuals will apparently tend to be incapable of initiative and unfitted for single and isolated responsibility. Under the direction of a great head it will achieve great objects more quickly and more completely than a nation of individuals. Yet without great leaders its sense of responsibility will diminish, and without great objects persistently and clearly held before it, it will tend to succumb to indifference from its lack of a feeling of the need of great objects, or to indirection from its failure to perceive them. This State will be capable alike of great feats of organisation and great faults of disorder. Feeling and acting as one man, its successful enterprises, having behind them the force of an undivided energy and the strength of a universal emotion, will be extraordinarily successful. Feeling as one man, a single disaster, a single disappointment, will tend to affect the whole of the people equally, and thus sensibly, and sometimes irretrievably to diminish their power of recovery. That nation has no reserve of feeling which puts all its heart into a single enterprise. Its successes will almost always be brilliant; its failures will often tend to be disasters.

Much of this is necessarily true of Japan, a nation of families, if not, as might be said, a family-nation. The family is the social unit, and the family is the father and eldest son, not the husband and wife. The difference has a wider incidence than its description implies. Filial duties and obligations hold almost as high a place as ever in the code of daily conduct. Elder sons qualify themselves not so much for a career as for succession to the headship of the family. Younger sons admit the immense precedence of the eldest, and accept his example and precept as the oracular voice of the representative of a consecrated tradition. Daughters, even in a Japanese age which admits women to many of the benefits of the higher education, bow before a supreme obligation of submission to the other sex, whether its representative be father, brother, or husband. The *inkyō* custom, under which elders resign both family headship and business responsibility to their successors at an age at which men in the West expect still to crown their life's work with its greatest undertakings, emerges in the social arena of the Japan of to-day almost as persistently as under the conditions of a former age, with the general habit of which it was more consonant, as to the general interest of which it was certainly less detrimental.

There are two forces opposing the development of responsible individuality in Japan. Government, pursuing its programme of universal reform, invites the individual to rely upon it for that which he should himself accomplish; and family usage induces him to think with others rather than by himself. Government supplies that which his own energies should achieve; the family tradition deflects his energies into illegitimate channels. The individual tends to expect and to accept

too much from government, and ancient usage requires him to give too much to the family. Government, pursuing its great end, swathes the life and the activities of the individual in a bondage of minute and detailed regulation which seems to bring his very hearth under the purview of law. And the individual, surrounded by the providence of government, is more rather than less inclined to lose his identity in the family. The very powers and qualifications with which government seeks to endow the individual in order to conserve and extend its project of general reform are often wasted, misapplied, or lost, merely from the individual's failure to appreciate the importance of his personal initiative and responsibility. Men do not conceive life in the proportions and relations that compose the individualistic view in the West. They do not see it primarily as a 'course' to be run, a struggle in which they are under obligations either to succeed or to fail, a contest in which the spirit of man must conceive and apprehend a purpose to be achieved, and his mind a policy whereby to achieve it. Men of the highest classes and the lowest in Japan are frequently found giving the lie to the scheme of their lives. Change of occupation seems to be a diversion rather than a fault. Bank managers assume the control of railways; railway managers assume the direction of newspapers; professional men easily transfer to industrial and commercial callings; the class of professional politicians is recruited from every vocation. Similarly, in the lowest ranks, men flit from occupation to occupation and from one part of the country to another without apparent motive save that of impulse. It is but another phase of the same social symptom that specialists in Japan usually wrap themselves so tightly in the bands of their

specialty that they cease to be capable of mental activity beyond it. Their specialism becomes pedantry, and they lose a proper view of the general interest in their concentration upon the tasks of their particular inquiries. It is the same mind as that which, by its failure to concentrate upon a leading objective, dissipates its powers in a series of activities having no logical or actual connection. The same mind in both cases fails to appreciate the importance of cumulative purpose. The individuality of the one is lost in its special activity ; that of the other disappears in a multitude of diverse and unconnected energies.<sup>1</sup>

Viscount Watanabe, a former Minister of Finance, on returning from a visit to Europe, is found to declare his mind as follows : 'One thing chiefly differentiates Occidental from Oriental civilisation. While in the West character and capacity have been splendidly developed through the power of free individuality, Orientals, under the evil influences of Confucianism and pessimistic Buddhism, fail to achieve the same development of character and abilities. Confucianism at best teaches submission to the decrees of fate and providence, and this admonition inevitably undermines the spirit of enterprise. The influence of Buddhist pessimism inclines even our politicians and men of business to long for a premature retirement from activity.'

Upon the facts — the phenomena — there is no dispute. The exceptional remark is indeed permissible, that when a Japanese succeeds in releasing his habit and thought from the physical and psychical bonds in which

<sup>1</sup> This is, of course, written without reference to the immense usefulness—the demonstrated usefulness—in war of the Japanese aptitude for self-effacement and for self-immolation in service of a national purpose.

his present political environment and his traditional social consciousness enshroud him,—when, in fact, he asserts his individuality, that individuality is usually competent for very great achievements. Only thus is modern Japan to be accounted for, since it is certainly the achievement of a small group of individuals who cut adrift from the former psychic consciousness of the nation, and undertook, so far with success, to introduce it to a new political environment. The task of this group—one of its tasks—is to create individuality in Japan without destroying the only medium whereby the process can be continued—the psychic homogeneousness of the nation. They must foster initiative and idiosyncrasy while preventing faction and discord.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It must be understood that the observations and inferences of this paper apply exclusively to conditions among the Japanese people. As the latter part of this volume will show, it is the writer's belief that the Japan of the Japanese leaders illustrates a concept of free individuality which to the mind of Europe must appear too daring for general assertion, since it tends virtually to deny God. The explanation of the appearance of this concept belongs, however, rather to a discussion of Japan's future than to a display of present Japanese conditions.



## XII

### THE JAPANESE 'ATMOSPHERE'

It might be difficult to decide whether the simplicity of Japanese life represents an earlier or a later stage of social development—a higher or a lower civilisation—than the luxury and particularised refinement of the West. That in origin it has not been altogether a simplicity of choice is probable, for the means of indulgence could never have been profuse in the old Japan, and sumptuary laws were a feature of the codes of the former *régime*. This simplicity survives to-day as the dominating note of contrast with the social habit of all our Western peoples. It is not, as might be supposed from its probable origins, the simplicity of parsimony. Nowhere does it wear this appearance. No people certainly is more exquisitely skilled in the art and the grace of giving. It is not as if they knew not, or had never known, profusion and the royal pleasures of magnificence. On fit occasion the Japanese are capable of both. It is rather as if they had learned the vanity, if not the folly, of magnificence for its own sake, and had therefore fallen back upon the truer pleasure of treating it as exceptional and extraordinary. And at last it seems as if this retreat had crystallised into a habit, or an affection of the mind, which to ignore

would be to incur the penalties of a war with nature. Marquis Ito, having tasted the glory and splendour of the world, is more than content, so it is reported of him, to retire upon the emptiness of his Japanese house. Some of the men who have come to riches in Japan's new commercial era have built themselves hybrid homes—one half European, the other half Japanese. In time, if not at once, the European half is merely a suite of rooms for the reception of foreign visitors. A Japanese, after years in Europe, sits rather uncomfortably on our padded chairs. He has the higher authority of nature for sitting on his heels.

So the Japanese habit of life is above all things simple. Whatever strength comes from the capacity to do without should belong to this people more than to any other in all the coming conflicts of races and race organisms. Japanese cities are wildernesses of uniformity. Simplicity of necessity has its untoward, uninviting aspects. Uniformity is one of them. And the inhabitants are content to do without space, so the streets are narrow. They are sufficiently pleased with a regnant cleanliness in their homes, so their streets are ill-kept, unpaved, often unclean. They accept nature without art, so by day they remove the walls of their houses for the visitation of nature's winds and sunshine, while by night they approve the natural dark by having their streets lit of lamps that are merely to be seen, not to see by. Their domestic tastes are not aspiring, so their houses are low, and, except inns, tea-houses, and resorts of pleasure, of one storey only—that upon the ground. The houses are simple and evanescent. There is no domestic architecture. A Japanese house is a house, as it were, only by night, for by day every wandering breeze has the freedom of

it, every passing pair of eyes may inhabit it. Three rooms might be an average dwelling in the cities, including servants' quarters. In the busy streets the front room is a shop, in which the commodities for sale are displayed with little art save order. There is no glass, no front, no door. The shops are really stalls with permanent roofs. Behind them there is a living room, which is usually also an eating and sleeping room. The vista, as you see it from the street, closes in a glimpse of green—the fronds of a palm or the feathers of a bamboo. This is the foliage of the garden, perhaps six feet square.

Here there is a great advantage of Japanese simplicity. This capacity for contentment with small things, though, on the one hand, it often tends to be a contentment with mean things, may also be a capacity for the realisation of fine things in miniature. Where, not having big measure, we prefer to do without, Japanese simplicity accepts the essence with gladness and true enjoyment. In a little part it sees the beautiful whole; in a single blossom it beholds all the loveliness of flowers; in a dwarf pine it sees a noble forest. There is that which is admirable in such simplicity; on this basis a nation need not be rich to be lovers of art, or cultivators of it, or disciples of it. Hence, doubtless, is it that the Japanese, though among the poorest of peoples, are the one nation of artists. They do reverence to all nature in gardens six feet square given upon by their parlour-dining-bedroom in very mean streets. Elsewhere, in streets more certainly residential, this garden is often next the street (in front of the house, that is), somewhat larger perhaps, but again simple, for its owners are content to do without the sun except as it may strain through

the close-knit uprights of a bamboo fence taller than a man. Sometimes the simplicity of Japanese taste restrains indulgence in the pleasures of nature and gardens within the limits of a dish eighteen inches square, on which a little pine breathes benediction over many pebbled walks and rocky mounds, and mayhap even a bridge over an empty pool, meaning a lake or roaring river. There is great advantage in the simplicity that extracts all the riches of the earth from a spadeful of it. It is surely an admirable economy that appreciates the whole world of art in the symbol of a single vase exhibited on great occasions. The Japanese, though they are able to do without, nevertheless have a great deal more than we may suspect. Those surely are richest whose wealth is part of themselves—of their hearts, their minds, their souls. Such may endure to be deprived even of that which they have without great loss.

And this Japanese simplicity is everywhere cheerful. It is not as if this people made sacrifices with regret, or submitted to deprivations because they could not help themselves. They never seem to be accepting an unkind doom with moroseness. There are no Japanese faces wry with the pain or heavy with the chagrin of ill-borne restraints. Having themselves preferred simplicity in their indulgences, it seems that nature, in reward of this continence, has deprived their sorrows of heaviness and complexity. Or should we say that it is but a law of action and reaction, a natural balance or compensation? Prescribing limits to their joys—practising severity or simplicity, that is—they are thereby able at the approach of woe to call up unspent resources of comfort.

At any rate it is quite certain that the Japanese

people are, upon the surface, practical and thorough optimists. They are as cheerful as the indifferent, unclean Italians, with the difference that though cheerful they are neither indifferent nor unclean. There is, so to say, full appreciation of the inner tragedy of life, with a polite refusal to admit the exclusive relevancy of the tragedy. Almost, as it were, they perceive the tragedy without troubling to understand it, without conceding that it is necessary to understand it. Life may be terrible, but a wise man, a prudent and disciplined people, need not, will not have it so. It is rare to hear a crying child or to see a suffering one in Japan. It is difficult to find a grumbling old man or a petulant old woman. As the paradise of children, the country is long since a proverb. It is equally the home of honoured and contented age. Of Japanese women it might be said that they are by law prohibited from being uncheerful. If it be only a conventional law it is nevertheless stringent, and the Japanese woman is the most loyal adherent of its justice. Of the men of Japan it may be said, that if they do not admit a constant obligation of cheerfulness for themselves they are diligent to avoid disturbance of the cheerfulness of others. They at least say, 'If our worries do not allow of our wearing a constant smile we shall not wear our worries where our smile should be.' It is sober truth that in the most solemn and trying passages of business the Japanese never fail to open the matter with a laugh. In railway carriages, or indeed where you like in Japan, conversation is usually begun with a smile and punctuated with laughter. Often, of course, this Japanese hilarity is not very reasonable; it may be difficult to detect its logic, but where other cause seems to be lacking may not one fall back upon the admirable law

of Japanese cheerfulness? If this condition has come to be the norm of the Japanese temperament, it is not likely that it should always be reasonable in its manifestations. If it be permitted to us to be sad only for wantonness, belike the Japanese are sometimes cheerful with the same unreasonableness.

So Japanese life, if its face and general aspect bear a prominent character of simplicity, wears also a very public superscription of cheerfulness, the image of a shining yet not ignorant or indifferent content, the sign of a conscious and informed acquiescence in a duty of happiness even in the midst of woe.

Yet this character is neighbour to the Japanese incapacity for proper seriousness. Its heaviness being put away, life in Japan is no longer an onerous and responsible task. Throughout the smiling country, everywhere among its cheerful people, adjunct to their very simplicity, you may mark an ignorance or, as it may be, an innocence of the implications of the strenuous life. A Japanese, it may be said for a generalisation, is never oppressed by the spectacle of an enigmatic world. He is never harassed into the pursuit of a laudable aim, nor even urged to the execution of an admirable duty, by the terrible goad of the social conscience. Humanity, the world, destiny, God, do not rise upon his eyes as fearful Juggernauts demanding the immolation of his mind, his body, his life. He is never overborne by the weight of the world. History, the past, the present, the future, do not sear his conscience or affright his soul. His cheerfulness having repudiated tragedy, he comes to be, it may be that he is, incapable of truly conceiving it. So there is often an appearance in Japan as if the people with whom one has relations there had lost the articles or the canon of that which

we call the social conscience. *Shigatakanai*, meaning 'What does it matter?' or 'Devil care!' is a phrase writ very large in the social annals of the country; it comes so often to one's ears, or so apt to the lips of the average Japanese, that one might well mistake it for half the whole colloquial language. It is a freak for a train to be up to time on a Japanese railway, but the phrase *shigatakanai* carries the people along. With it they always arrive at their ultimate destination in time; with it they annihilate time; from it they conclude that life itself is wholly unimportant; under its ægis their to-day is nearly always to-morrow, their now the middle of next week. Perhaps it should be regarded as only the defect of their optimism; it is certain that it represents what we of the West feel to be a fault, or an incapacity, so to say, for irrevocableness. It is, I suppose, for the Japanese to disprove it a fault. It is certain that he who should go to Japan expecting punctuality and precision is to be disillusioned. If he be wise he will read *shigatakanai* into the sense of every business appointment; he will write it at the foot of every social invitation. Public undertakings of moment wait upon the indisposition of a minor official, and the people murmur *shigatakanai*—the Japanese kismet. In the seasons of rain and flood railways are broken with punctual regularity at given points, so that one may sketch the plan of one's itinerary on the basis of a breakage on given lines at given dates. The Companies do not list the breakages in their annual timetables, but some of them might. In any event Japanese travellers scarcely breathe a protest. With them it is not the fault of the railway but an incident in an imperfect world. They do not grapple with these injuries; they accept them. They do not seek to im-

prove life, or if they do they improve it by attuning their minds to its disagreeableness. Circumstances have a terrible strength in Japan. The people almost allow them the strength of fate.

Japanese life, besides that it is simple and cheerful, is thus easy and nonchalant, almost, one should say, purposeless, from an ingrained habit of universal toleration and a confirmed inappreciation of the European inexorableness of duty and the European preciousness of life and time. With a practical outlook on life and a lively or even excitable habit of mind, the nation is withal a nation of dreamers. The currents of their life run slow; their modern trains do well if they maintain an average of twenty miles per hour over a short distance, and certain railway embankments might well be scheduled for repair at an inevitable date every year.

It is probable, indeed, that the placidity rather than the simplicity of Japanese life spells the subtle enticement with which this country tempts the stranger. Simplicity is its important note of superficial contrast with the Western habit; its ease is the really subtle distinction, since this means that the total outlook upon affairs, upon the world, upon life, is different. The precedents of life are here new; the prior conditions are changed; the admissions or premises are of another kind, they belong to another order of ideas. They are a denial of the necessity of life and an affirmation of the necessity of circumstances. When one goes to Japan one must cease to believe that it is a bounden duty to work to-day and prepare for work to-morrow by sleep and rest to-night. If there be a proposal to work it shall stand on its own legs, having no reference to any known fact of life or death; if the suggestion



be sleep, one is to consider it apart from questions of recuperation, rest, and recreation. The reality, the logic of life—our reality, our logic—hold no sway there. Life and its modes seem to hang together upon another principle than ours. There is, indeed, a reference to underlying certainties ; a necessity is admitted, but the certainties and the necessity are not such as we are accustomed to recognise. They are more remote from the appearance of things than ours ; much further removed from the individual, who with us is the heart of the universe. The fulcrum of life—its centre of controlling interest—is shifted. We place it in the conscience of the individual. Japan goes farther back and deeper down, or she is perhaps universal where we are particular. She almost allows being ; we insist upon personality. There is no need for trains to hurry in Japan, since the despatch with which the traveller can dispose of his journey is not all the important matter. The curious and important matter is, that there happens to be a world with trains in it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The author is quite aware that some of the statements in this paper may appear almost preposterously inconsistent with the testimony of Japanese precision and organising capacity afforded by her uniform and overwhelming success in the war with Russia. It must again be pointed out, however, that while in war it is the Japanese Government and the Japanese leaders, the class of modern education and training, who are in action, in the social arena and in the private industrial activities of the nation the traditions and the habits of a former era still rule with a scarcely diminished authority.

## XIII

### EDUCATION AND CHARACTER

OF a people so much at the disposal of authority, so unequivocally in the hands of their rulers, as the Japanese, it is important to know what they are taught by authority. The education of the people is accepted as the crucial responsibility of the modern era by its makers, who, by their attitude towards religion, seem to confess that in their view education is the exclusive conservator, if not the only creator, of national character.

The master purpose—what should be the master purpose—of education in Japan is at once easy to perceive and peculiarly difficult to attain. This purpose is to preserve what is best in the historical character of the nation, and at the same time to instil the accumulated knowledge and inculcate the fundamental principles of the adoptive civilisation of Europe.

Education—elementary education—is compulsory from the sixth to the fourteenth year. In 1904 there were 27,138 primary schools, with a total staff of 108,360 teachers for 5,084,099 pupils.<sup>1</sup> The official 'Regulations concerning the elementary school course'

<sup>1</sup> In recent years there has been a great shortage of teachers, chiefly because of the poor salaries offered—from £10 to £25 per year, with a sprinkling of posts at from £30 to £45!

exhibit the main intention of Japanese popular education. Art. I. says : 'The culture of the moral sensibilities should be chiefly attended to in the education of children. Hence, in teaching any subject of study special attention should be paid to those topics which are connected with moral education and with education specially adapted to make the children good members of the community. The knowledge and skill imparted to children should be sound and practical. Therefore such topics as refer to the interests of daily life and conduct shall be selected and taught so as to enable the children intelligently and practically to apply what they have learned.' Art. II. definitely specifies the concepts and practices which, in the view of the modern Japanese *régime*, constitute a moral education. 'Instruction in morals shall be given . . . and the cultivation of the conscience of children, the fostering of their moral sensibilities, and the enforcement of the practical performance of human duties shall be considered the special objects of this instruction. In ordinary elementary schools such virtues as filial piety, brotherly love, kindness, faithfulness, politeness, courage, respectfulness, frugality, etc., shall be practically encouraged ; and the spirit of loyalty and patriotism shall be specially awakened. The duties towards the State shall also be briefly pointed out, as well as the social sanctions and the sense of honour, which must be regarded as of high importance, so that the children are induced to refine their manners and improve their character. In the higher elementary schools the above topics shall be enlarged, pains being taken at the same time to secure firm and lasting results. In the case of girls, such excellent virtues as fidelity and gentleness shall be specially attended to by the teachers. Instruction in

morals shall be given by means of simple proverbs, good maxims, facts, etc.'

It will be seen that the modern Japanese State interprets the scope of education as comprehending the duties and responsibilities of the parental relation and even the functions of religion, as these are conceived in most Western States. This, in fact, follows from the Japanese State's virtual repudiation of religion,—a repudiation to be hereafter discussed in its truly remarkable significance,—which is indifferently disguised under a cloak of neutrality.

In Japan—by Japanese educators—the psychological basis of education is accepted as co-extensive with the child's total consciousness, moral, intellectual, physical. This view of education is not yet accepted in all its implications by any Western State: in its full significance it denotes a profound difference between the Japanese and the Western attitude towards, and method with, life. This difference will be investigated hereafter in connection with the Japanese concept and practice of religion.

The curriculum of the elementary schools, in addition to the inculcation of morals and manners, embraces the subjects usually accepted as essential by the compilers of codes in Europe—reading and composition, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, drawing, singing, gymnastics, cutting and sewing (for girls), manual work, science, etc. After the elementary schools there is an Ordinary Middle School course of five years, and a Higher Middle School course of two years, the latter leading to the threshold of the universities. In 1901 there were 217 Middle Schools, with 3726 teachers and 77,994 pupils. The first year curriculum at the Ordinary Middle Schools is as follows: ethics (morals),

one hour per week ; Japanese language and Chinese literature, five hours ; a first foreign language (usually English), six hours ; geography, one hour ; history, one hour ; mathematics, four hours ; natural history, one hour ; writing, two hours ; drawing, two hours ; singing, two hours ; gymnastics, three hours. In the fourth and fifth years gymnastics ('common exercises') become 'military exercises.' The Higher Middle School course includes such additional subjects as zoology, botany, geology, mineralogy, physics, chemistry, astronomy, political economy, philosophy, and surveying. This course prepares the student, now twenty years of age or more, for matriculation at either of the two Japanese universities—Tokyo or Kyoto.<sup>1</sup>

In general it may be said of popular education in Japan that its intention is to preserve or foster in the moral consciousness of the nation those ideas and principles of social conduct upon which the fabric of Japanese society is traditionally founded, and to enlarge the intellectual outlook and multiply the intellectual aptitudes of the nation by introducing it to the wondrous academies of Western science. These two purposes necessarily conflict at more than one point of contact. Especially, perhaps, do they fail to harmonise Western and Eastern theories of individualism, for the old, traditional Japan witnessed, as one of the effects of a universal despotism, the practical extinction of individuality in the social economy, whereas nothing is more

<sup>1</sup> The author has not deemed it essential in a work like the present to display in detail the fabric and routine of Japanese educational institutions. It may be said, however, that among the modern institutions of the country deserving the study of European experts the higher educational establishments would rank immediately after the Army and Navy. Japanese technical schools, in particular, are models almost for the world at large ; and the College of Engineering of the University of Tokyo by competent critics has been named as probably the best organised, if not the best equipped, in the world.

evident of the tendency of modern education than its evocation and encouragement of individuality. In the present writer's belief this collision of two vitally important principles in the nature and effect of Japanese education—in the total economy of the country, in fact—is more apparent than real. As a very capable writer says: 'Japan has begun to be an individualistic nation.'<sup>1</sup> But Japanese individualism promises to be a unique individualism.

What is the historically evolved Japanese character upon which fall the seeds of this semi-modern, semi-traditional education of Japan? There has always been extraordinary diversity of opinion as to the salient points of Japanese character. The conflicting verdicts in fact reflect extraordinary contradictions. Hardly a single generalisation may be used of the nation without a schedule of exceptions being 'put in' along with it. It has already been indicated<sup>2</sup> that the European theory of moral affinities cannot well be imported into a discussion of the Japanese character for the illumination of a subject intrinsically difficult. The Japanese have now proved themselves, in the very eye of the world, heroic to a pitch of uncanny excess, but it is not to be assumed that they are therefore truthful, as the European theory of moral affinities almost instinctively infers brave men to be. They have given the world a noble example of magnanimity and chivalry on the battlefield, but it remains true that in commerce their vision is oblique and their practice equivocal. Many observers have pronounced the Japanese to be emotional and impulsive,<sup>3</sup> yet there probably never has been so extraordinary an

<sup>1</sup> *Evolution of the Japanese*, Sydney L. Gulick.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. iv.

<sup>3</sup> A Japanese writer in a recent article on the historical development of Japanese character says: 'It is only by bearing in mind that feeling predominates in the Japanese character that the history of Japanese politics can be understood.'

instance of a people apparently devoid of feeling—or supremely capable of repressing it—as Japan furnished during the struggle with Russia. Clearly, no theory of moral affinities, as held in Europe, is applicable to Japanese character.

A recent elaborate and conscientious attempt to display the character of the Japanese<sup>1</sup> properly brackets an opposing defect with almost every quality which it is proper to enumerate in the list of Japanese characteristics. ‘The Japanese,’ the writer says, ‘give the double impression of being industrious and diligent on the one hand, and on the other of being lazy and utterly indifferent to the lapse of time.’ Again, ‘two other strangely contrasted traits are—absolute confidence and trustfulness on the one hand, and suspicion on the other.’ Again, jealousy, revenge, and callousness—all of which might be illustrated by numerous examples from Japanese history and Japanese life of to-day—are clearly in conflict with Japanese humanity and kindness, the former evidenced by that solicitude for the aged and the indigent which relieves the Japanese State of burdens accepted by most of the governments of the West as their natural responsibility—the latter proved by the universal politeness of the people, a politeness of which a great authority,<sup>2</sup> after more than a quarter of a century’s personal intercourse with the people, writes that ‘it is rooted in genuine kindness, especially among the lower classes.’

Similarly, there is Japanese fickleness and Japanese stolidity and stoicism; Japanese ambition and conceit and Japanese deprecation of Japanese achievement; Japanese æstheticism, demonstrated by a national art uniquely delicate and often incomparably idealistic, and

<sup>1</sup> *Evolution of the Japanese*, already quoted.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. B. H. Chamberlain.

Japanese vulgarity, witnessed by the salacity of nearly all Japanese drama and of much of the fanciful literature of the country. The Japanese, on the confession of their own publicists, are apt to 'give up' or to 'give in,' yet there is hardly in all history a greater example of resolution and persistence in the execution of a great purpose in face of mountains of opposing difficulty than the conduct of the modern Japanese era to its present stage of brilliant—if still incomplete—success by a small group of Japanese statesmen.

It is probable—indeed it is certain—that much of the confusion and contradiction that emerge as the leading result of any scrutiny of Japanese characteristics should be referred to the social and political transformations of the time.

If it were possible to regard the art of a nation as its true soul, a delineation perhaps distinctive and at least interesting of the Japanese genius might be practicable. In the mirror of Japanese art we seem to see a people sensible of the delicacies and refinements of beauty rather than of her full-blown voluptuous charms. It is an elusive if not almost an evasive art. To characterise it in the terms of a sister art would be to say that it is lyric rather than epic, and to speak of it in the language of philosophy it would be necessary to say that it is nine times or nine parts subjective and once or one part objective. It is essentially a poetical art, with the moods of poetry and some of its limitations. It is idealistic, and therefore in one sense individualistic and in another sense conventional. It is individualistic inasmuch as every practiser of it sees his 'subject' through the haze of his own feeling; it is conventional inasmuch as a purely idealistic art sooner or later accepts the dictate of its greatest interpreter. Beside



the art of Europe that of Japan lacks organisation, comprehensiveness, grandeur ; it possesses poetry, harmony, exquisiteness. The sweetness and the grace of their art seems to proclaim a kind and courteous people ; its narrowness seems to avouch their lack of originality. They are sentimental, even as their art is emotional and poetic ; they are probably fickle, since their art-faculty flits not from one phase of a great 'scheme' to another, but from one flower of art-expression to another. They may perhaps be regarded as secretive, for their art loves semi-tones and the atmosphere of dawn and sunset, and it might be permissible to allege that they are a people of second thoughts or of mental reservations, because their art, when it is not minute, is nearly always suggestive and seductive rather than open, candid, and luminous. They are incomparably tasteful, for their colours are incomparably harmonious, and as their colour-schemes are never bold, never harsh, never 'striking,' it may be assumed that they are given to self-restraint.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An essay at interpretation at the Japanese character from the evidences of the national literature is hardly within the capacity of the present writer, but the conclusions of Mr. W. G. Aston, the only European who has written a comprehensive survey of Japanese literature, may be quoted, because they are alike interesting and authoritative. He says (*Japanese Literature*): 'It is the literature of a brave, courteous, light-hearted, pleasure-loving people, sentimental rather than passionate, witty and humorous, of nimble apprehension but not profound ; ingenious and inventive, but hardly capable of high intellectual achievement ; of receptive minds, endowed with a voracious appetite for knowledge ; with a turn for neatness and elegance of expression, but seldom or never rising to sublimity.' In a subsequent chapter I have attempted to examine the Japanese mind, and the conclusion is there suggested that its marked deficiency is in the quality of imagination.

## XIV

### DOGMA IN JAPANESE RELIGION

THE Japanese Statistical Bureau, in its principal publication, enumerates the priests or clergy,—the hierarchies,—the temples, and the shrines, of the different religions represented in Japan. No statistic of the adherents of separate religions is given. Moreover, the official mind seems scarcely to conceive or to admit 'religions'; it is 'cults' or 'creeds'—'forms of worship'—that are classified. The Western conception of religion cannot, in fact, be inferred of the Japanese habit of mind, or associated with the Japanese attitude towards phenomena. In this, more than in any other sphere of the efforts and adventures of human consciousness, there is a profound difference between Japan and the West—between Europe and Asia. Perhaps the difference is described as intelligibly as is possible when it is said that, while in the Western consciousness religion is everything or nothing, in the Japanese consciousness, the consciousness of Asia, it is allowed no particular precedence among the phases of apperception. Religion, conceived as God, and as a final and sufficient explanation of all phenomena, is not an Asiatic notion. The religious idea never seems to have been beheld in this majestic

and comprehensive character by the Japanese mind. Perhaps religion has acquired its aspect of necessity in Western thought mainly through the educative process of Christian concepts of the supremacy of a divine intelligence and of the universality of a divine providence, implying a collateral necessity of the subjection of the human intelligence and the mere particularity of human initiative. While Christianity illumines the gloom surrounding human destiny with postulated facts and postulated existences, ultimately—in the higher developments of the religious consciousness—acquiring a character of reality scarcely possessed by the phenomena of the visible material world itself, the religions of Asia have not presumed to be definite in a sphere in which the unaided intelligence of man hardly succeeds in apprehending a single tangible fact. Europe has become used to a conception of religion which, as it awards it a primary or fundamental importance in human theory or thought about the world and the cosmos, requires the most definite images and symbols for its support. Its images and symbols—otherwise its authority and dogma—being deprived, by whatever new discovery or whatever new inference, of their certainty, the fabric falls to the ground. In a word, religion to Western thought is either the most significant or the most negligible fact of life. It is the most significant when it is perceived or felt to be true ; it is the most negligible and contemptible when it is seen as false. We of Europe are true children of religious enthusiasm, but we are also apostles of the blankest atheism. They have not so raised religion to be the touchstone of life in Asia, or at any rate in Japan. They have not there, it might be said, realised a future world in a detail and with a certainty which

they find it impossible to postulate of the present. They have never succeeded in translating, if they have ever tried to translate, metaphysical ideas into logical dogma or sensual ritual representing dogma. It follows that of religion, as it is beheld or conceived in Europe, there is little or none in Japan. Almost equally it follows that there is widespread superstition. Religion being represented by clear and definite concepts, and being, as it were, founded upon a conviction of its own necessity, in the inevitable and universal exercise of its imperious prerogative banishes the small and particular explanations of superstition. On the other hand, as the human mind, uneducated in reason, or undisciplined in the stoic acceptance of the inexplicable, needs explanations, religion without a character of certainty is bound to connote superstition. It is a truism that superstition and religion are mutually inimical. So much is borne out by all the facts, and even by the statistics of religion, so-called, appertaining to Japan. The Japanese Statistical Bureau cannot well enumerate the congregations of sects in Japan when the great majority of the nation are equally, and at the same time, devout Buddhists and Shintoists, and even also Christians. Statistics of the hierarchies and of the temples and shrines are compiled with some proximate assurance that the designation of individual priests and local temples and shrines as Shinto or Buddhist will be generally accurate, but it is a very small proportion of the people that might conscientiously announce themselves adherents of one form of religion to the exclusion of the other. This is the same thing as to say that the Japanese view of religion lacks the irrevocable character which has imparted to it its supreme significance and vital importance as a sociological and moral

fact in Europe and in European society. True dogma is unknown in Japan, and without dogma religion, as we of the West understand it, or have hitherto understood it, cannot be. Where dogma is not available for the explication of phenomena, appeal is inevitably made to superstition by minds uneducated in reason.

It is just, then, to say that Japan, as a political organisation or as a social state, is without religion in the Western or Christian sense. Responsibility to an inexorable canon of conduct embodied in the dogma and the tenets of a religion of authority, of tradition, or of revelation, is not recognised in any class of society from the highest to the lowest. Buddhism has its precepts for the regulation and government of an approximately ideal conduct, but it has no true dogma of God ; it affirms the existence of good and of evil, but it knows no such dogmatic explanation of the latter as the fall of man, and offers no hope of a final consummation of the former through the efficacy of a Divine Atonement. Its priests exhort the people to good things in private and in public. They preach in the temples, and they appear in the daily lives of the people, but they do not awe with the menace of a doctrine of hell, or support with the comfort of a dogma of heaven. There are 'services' in the Buddhist temples, but in no part of the ritual can the worshippers—if they may be so called—apprehend the meaning of an elevation of the Host, or discern the personal and intimate significance of a rite of the Eucharist. Not even the educated classes, in the infrequent examples which they afford of a sincere attachment to the Buddhist ecclesiastical organisation, support the connection upon a basis of intimate knowledge of the formulæ of the creed ; and a large

proportion of the priests themselves, if they are able to apply the simpler Buddhist rules of conduct to the circumstances they find around them, are quite incapable of penetrating the metaphysics of their creed, or of expounding its history and displaying its development. The *sutras*, as the priests chant them to the accompaniment of an impressive appurtenance of ritual, are, indeed, as much to themselves as to their hearers, mere 'vain repetitions.'

From the sociological, the political, or even the moral standpoint it would thus be of little importance, even were it possible, to find how the people of the country are assorted as to religious belief. It is enough merely to state that there are in Japan perhaps 150,000 Buddhist bonzes and a nearly equal number of Shinto priests; that there are nine principal sects of Buddhism, serving perhaps 80,000 temples throughout the country; and nearly 200,000 Shinto temples and shrines; and finally, that virtually the whole nation, by voluntary support of the temples of both cults, and by participation in the fêtes or festivals—they might often more truly be described as 'fairs'—celebrated periodically by every temple of importance, makes what by courtesy may be called a 'profession' of both creeds, while by their devotion to the practice of ancestor-worship they almost appear to elevate the essential principle of Shintoism to the high status of a national faith.

For, if it may not be said of the Japanese that they conceive religion as in the West it is conceived, it ought not perhaps to be assumed that they are therefore incapable of devotion. A thousand evidences might be adduced in disproof of any generalisation implying that they are an undevotional people. Their devotion fails perhaps to contemplate truly sublime

objects, and it may be that it is often tainted by an intrusion of motives incompatible with the idea of self-surrender inherent in the Western conception of the service of a Higher Power. No Japanese fails to pay, once in his life, a visit of devotion to the great shrine of the ancestors of the Imperial family, at Ise, in Central Japan. The pilgrimage may often be undertaken with a motive of warding off the dangers and misfortunes to be apprehended from its omission, or of meriting the rewards to be expected at the hands of the gratified gods; yet even Western piety sometimes expects benefits from its arduous exercises, and it is doubtful if the secret heart of human devotion ever is wholly pure, in the sense of its being wholly unselfish.

What is perhaps true of the Japanese is that, as they have never conceived religious dogma, they do not and cannot know true religious devotion. Their devotion merely fails to envisage truly religious objects. Not having known God—at any rate a dogmatic God—it might hardly be anticipated of them that they would render Him the service of their devotion.

Yet the nation is as one in its devotion to ancestor-worship. Without a dogmatic religion, without a doctrinal conception of God, it yet appears that they regard with an emotion, scarcely, if at all, to be distinguished from that of religious devotion, the idea and the duty of ancestor-worship, the essential principle of Shintoism, the cult which is purely Japanese in origin and history. The pilgrimage to the Ise shrine, undertaken at some period of his life by every Japanese, belongs to the service of this cult. Homage is there paid to the spirits of the Emperor's ancestors. Estimating the act by its object and its motives, the Western mind sees in it mere superstition. But if the practice

of ancestor-worship embrace the invocation of certain powers or existences exterior to man himself and to his physical environment, if it embrace a necessary ritual representing this invocation, and if, above all, it prescribe certain standards of social conduct representing, even in embryo, a categorical precept, wherein, it might be asked, is it to be distinguished, save in degree, from a dogmatic religion? Dogma, after all, is nothing until it is realised in conduct; religion is nothing if it fail to regulate habit and mould character. Japanese ancestor-worship is realised in acts which are part of the social conduct—even, it might be said, part of the social morality—of the Japanese people; it regulates some part of their habit, and in some degree shapes their essential character. If certain extraneous powers are not invoked, they are at any rate the objects of a kind of adoration; and it is certain that this adoration embraces a necessary ritual.

Sociologically, therefore, ancestor-worship is important; it has a direct bearing upon the life and the progress, upon the present and the future of Japan as an organised society and a political state. Though it may be held to represent the essential principle of Shintoism, the native cult with its establishment of some 200,000 temples and shrines throughout the country, it must be clearly differentiated therefrom. Ancestor-worship is, so to speak, the kernel of Shinto truth, Shintoism itself is the husk; and while the education, the enlightenment, and the science, with the credulity, the ignorance, and the reaction of Japan, meet at ancestral shrines to celebrate a common devotion, it is certain that the husk of Shinto, its mythology, its demonology, its esoterics, its rituals, and its festivals have sunk to the level of curiosities of popular superstition in the estimation of the educated



mind of the country. The distinction, a distinction between Shintoism and ancestor-worship, does not possibly suggest itself even to the educated thought of Japan, and it would be impossible to assert or to trace a line of demarcation in the order of Japanese society, on one side of which the vital principle of Shinto—that is, ancestor-worship—alone is regarded. That a distinction is necessary is proved, however, by the single fact that, while the hieratic power of Shinto survives only among the lower classes—examples of Shinto funeral ceremonies are still common among the upper classes, but they are instances of subscription to convention rather than of devotion to a cult—the practice of ancestor-worship is universal and, it can hardly be doubted, sincere.

In an exposition of ancestor-worship in its relation to modern Japanese law, a Japanese writer indicates the general position with sufficient lucidity. 'In Europe and America,' he says, 'ancestor-worship has long since ceased to exist, even if it was ever practised at all on those continents. In Japan, where at the present time a constitutional government is established, where codes of law modelled upon those of Western countries are in operation—where, in short, almost every art of civilisation has taken firm root, the worship of deceased ancestors still obtains and still exercises a powerful influence over the laws and customs of the people. The practice dates back to the earliest days of our history, and has survived through hundreds of generations in spite of the many political and social revolutions which have taken place since the foundation of the empire. The introduction of Chinese civilisation into the country [chiefly from the sixth to the eighth century] was favourable to the growth of this custom by reason of the fact that the morality, laws, and insti-

tutions of China are also based upon the doctrine of ancestor-worship. Buddhism [received from China *via* Korea in the sixth century], which is not based upon this doctrine, but is, on the contrary, antagonistic to it, was compelled to yield to the deep-rooted belief of the people, and wisely adapted itself to the national practice; while the introduction of Western civilisation, which has wrought so many social and political changes during the last thirty years, has had no influence whatever in the direction of modifying the custom. . . . To Western eyes the sight would appear strange of a Japanese family inviting their relatives, through the medium of the telephone, to take part in a ceremony of this nature [ancestor-worship]; while equally incongruous would seem the spectacle of the members of the family, some of them attired in European and others in native costume, assembled in a room lighted by electricity, making offerings and obeisances before the memorial tablet of their ancestors. The people, whether Shintoists or Buddhists, are all ancestor-worshippers. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Ancestor-worship, then, or Shintoism stripped of its excrescence of mythology and esoterics, is Japan's somewhat dim eidolon of a dogmatic religion. Buddhism at the fountain-head is dogmatic in a negative sense; it makes dogma of abstractions, so to speak. In Japan it very early came to an understanding with Shintoism—the excrescent, mythologic, esoteric Shintoism—and to-day the Japanese people are both Buddhist and Shintoist without consciousness of contradiction. Even the hierarchies, the establishment, the ritual, the mythology, and the esoterics of the two creeds—so-called—meet and mingle at certain points. Neither in fact is now

<sup>1</sup> *Ancestor-Worship and Japanese Law.* By Nobushige Hozumi, Tokyo, 1901.

dogmatic, if at any time in Japan they can be said to have been dogmatic. But the kernel of Shinto, ancestor-worship, separated from excrescent Shinto, and imaged in a particular ritual, has almost the effect of dogma, even if, in truth, there is behind it no solid fabric of doctrine. The Japanese attitude towards ancestor-worship is at least quasi-devotional, and a generous interpretation will almost allow the cult the status of a national faith.

As dogma, or quasi-dogma, ancestor-worship in the Japan of to-day postulates the divine origin of the Imperial family. The mythological tradition evidencing this divine origin is generally accepted by the people somewhat as the Biblical record of the origin of man, at the hands of a divine Creator, is accepted by the mass of Western religionists. Historical criticism has destroyed the sanctions of the mythological tradition in the minds of the educated class very much as Biblical criticism is held to have undermined the sanctions of the Mosaic story of the origin of man in the educated mind of Europe. For practical purposes, however, a dogma of the divine ancestry of the Japanese Imperial family, and therefore of the divinity of the reigning Emperor, survives in the popular mind in Japan in a reality equally vivid, and to an effect equally potent and far-reaching, with the survival of the dogma of the creation story in the scheme of Christian theology as still accepted by the intelligence of the mass of Western peoples. The important precept—it would be difficult to show why it should not be called a moral precept—flowing from this dogma is loyalty to the throne, which thus becomes a cult, realised in what is without doubt the most pronounced Japanese characteristic, a fervent nationalism striking chords upon a diapason of emotion,

in truth much fuller and deeper than its mere keynote, the Imperial sacrosanctity. Some part of this religious nationalism is spurious; its life, large, full and vivid to-day, rests upon the dogma of the divine ancestry of the Emperor's family, implicitly accepted by the people, and shrouded, as far as possible, from critical inspection by the Japanese leaders.

In the social and personal habit and conduct of the people, ancestor-worship emerges as the main support and sanction of the ethic of filial piety, the corner-stone of the fabric of Japanese society. It is true that in origin this ethic is more truly Confucian and Chinese, but it is evident that the unquestioning acceptance and the consistent celebration in rites of a canon of reverence for family ancestors must tend to evoke and perpetuate that ethic of reverence for elders, and especially for parents, which is the realised precept of the canon of filial piety. In fact, filial piety is the only rule of social conduct among the Japanese which has any appearance of reposing upon dogmatic or quasi-dogmatic sanctions, just as Japanese loyalty is the only code which displays anything of the character of our, the Western, concept of religion.

The rites and rituals of this cult fill a considerable space in the life of the people, national, local, and private. It is true that the public festivals, in which its quasi-canon is enshrined, like the saints' days of Europe, commonly assume the character of mere ebullitions of the popular passion for amusement—as keen in Japan as it is elsewhere—while the household celebrations are doubtless invested, as all rituals of frequent repetition tend to be invested, with a merely conventional aspect of sanctity. Ancestor-worship and its quasi-dogmatic canon are no doubt overlaid, or even sometimes stifled,

by an excrescence of superstitious and esoteric Shintoism. The Japanese writer already quoted nevertheless affirms no more than the truth when he says that 'the worship of the Imperial ancestors is the national worship,' and it is difficult to differentiate from real religious or dogmatic devotion the mind which prompts such acts as the same writer describes in these sentences: 'When a young student goes to Europe to pursue his studies, when a soldier sets out on a campaign, when an official is sent abroad on some Government service, or when a merchant undertakes a long journey on business, he invariably visits the graves of his ancestors in order to take leave of them. When they live in places distant from their ancestral graves, they very often make long journeys in order to visit the tombs, and make sacrifices to them. . . . In fact, the worship of the spirits of ancestors forms a part of the everyday life of the people.'

In the end, however, it is clear that the Japanese people are without religion as it is understood in the West. They seem to have the capacity for religious devotion—a capacity universal as the human mind itself—but it fails to envisage objects which Europe would regard as truly sublime, or truly religious—objects, that is to say, truly deserving the service of their religious devotion. They have no adequate explanation of phenomena and life and the cosmos in the form of a concept of an omnipresent, self-existent Creator imaged in dogma. And of the splendid fabric of a systematic theology—splendid even if viewed as a human creation—they have never had a glimpse in all the varied history of their religious consciousness and metaphysical speculation. Their mental or spiritual view, the totality of their perceptions, has never been

furnished with the background of an elaborate dogmatic creed, complete to the minutest details of categorical precept, such as, since the general spread of Christianity over Europe, has comforted, inspired, and terrified the eternal hope of our Western peoples. Thus inevitably the Japanese attitude towards the profound mysteries of life has no character of irrevocableness, of finality, or even of decision. They do not conceive a necessity inherent in religion; they have never associated with it the extraordinarily potent idea of the absolute; they do not know religious dogma. Under certain conditions they are the easiest of converts to a new religion; they are also the most facile apostates.

Without religious dogma the Japanese people, the masses,—save in the sphere of ancestor-worship, their quasi-religion,—retreat upon superstition. The leaders retreat upon reason.

## XV

### THE PROVINCE OF SUPERSTITION

SUPERSTITION, conceived as local or particular dogma, fades before religion in its character of universal dogma. Whatever quality of universal dogma there may be or may have been at the heart of the Japanese religions, the comparative failure of that quality is proved by the prevalence and vitality of superstition in the country. Even if a heart of universal dogma be postulated of Buddhism in order to explain its immense vogue not only in Japan but throughout Asia, there is no doubt that around its core of universal dogmatic truth accretions of superstition—or local, because exclusively Japanese, dogma—have accumulated, and the heart, probably never robust, beats but faintly beneath the weight. In other words, while Buddhism may possess a true soul of religion, the ignorant mind of Japan long ago began to regard it through a mist of superstition, while the educated mind of the Japan of to-day at best sees it only as a fog of metaphysics. Shinto, apart from the quasi-dogmas of ancestor-worship, of which it may perhaps claim the tutelage, never even professed a soul of universal dogma, and its crowded pantheon, with representatives of every passion, every weakness, every faculty, almost, it might be said, every whim and phantasy of the human mind, witnesses

the demand of the latter for particular or local explanations of phenomena and facts in the absence of the concept of a universal first Cause. Shintoism, making no pretence of universal dogma, thereby invited and encouraged—nay, propagated—superstition. Buddhism possessing, let us admit, a soul of universal dogma, or true religion, held this heritage too lightly, and having opened the door to superstition, or local and particular dogma, it ultimately found a master in its guest. Very early in its Japanese career Buddhism accepted the entire pantheon and calendar of Shinto gods and saints, explaining its hospitable complaisance, to itself perhaps, as well as to the Japanese people, by the assurance that these in their day had surely been incarnations or avatars of Buddha. A religion which hopes effectively to dispossess another can never afford to make the compromises that are proper in politics. One secret of the success of Christianity has been, of course, its dogmatic implacability. This implacability suits for the age, from which we have not yet emerged, from which probably we may never emerge, of man's subjection to a necessity of teleological explanations. It might no longer suit if men ceased to believe in the possibility of final explanations, and as we appear to be approaching that era, it is possible that the opportunity of Buddhism will return. Its placability will then perhaps be its recommendation, for men, despairing of the hope of a final or infallible explanation, will shun the uncharities of implacability. Christianity, by its very nature and authority, as a dogmatic system, has never been charitable to other religions. Buddhism has ever been placable, mainly because it has never had a clear and definite dogmatic system. And because it has never been clear and definite in its religious concepts, it has



never been able to resist the invasions of popular superstition. No adjustment of creeds was necessary as a preliminary to its reception of the myriad gods of Japanese Shintoism. Any hour was suitable for their incorporation in a system animated by a spirit of unbounded hospitality towards strange doctrine.

Buddhism, by its concessions to Japanese Shintoism, in its relation to the people at least, merely lost its needle of truth in a pottle of superstition. To-day the Japanese people are both Shintoist and Buddhist, but whereas some tendrils of the nation's heart undoubtedly twine around the quasi-dogmas of ancestor-worship—of which, as has been said, Shintoism may claim to be the foster-parent—Buddhism's appeal to the heart of Japan succeeds chiefly as an appeal to emotional superstition, and not as an appeal to dogma, spiritually or intellectually perceived.

Perhaps, however, the time has come when we should look at Japanese superstition—at all superstition—with the mental eye of a future age which may regard the difference between superstition and dogmatic religion as a difference not of character but of degree. It is conceivable that that age will detect a difference of degree only—a difference of degree expressing the steps of a progress from the local and particular to the general and universal. The scientific agnosticism of Europe even now refuses to recognise any valid distinction, since it tends to regard all religion merely as a larger conception of superstition. And, curiously, the educated mind of Japan, through a different process, reaches the same conclusion. Every step of the synthetic process from whimsical superstitious explanations to a dogma, national though not universal, may be seen represented in acts of the Japanese

people and in the concepts behind the acts. They fail in true religion—true religion as defined by Western religious opinion—because they fail in universal dogma. Yet it may be doubted if the hiatus be any wider than, or, indeed, any different in kind from the hiatus between the concept of a national church and a catholic. There are curious parallels in the psychical records of peoples apparently the most unlike in their psychical experience and the most distant in their ethnic relation. The Japanese dogmas, or quasi-dogmas, springing from the practice of ancestor-worship and the recognition of the divinity of the Imperial family, are not universal because they are peculiarly, indeed characteristically, national. Of all Japanese beliefs, or quasi-beliefs, they most nearly resemble universal dogma, though in truth there is an interval at least as wide as that between the concept of a national church and a catholic. Moreover, they evidently lack the potentiality of universality which may be said to inhere in the national churches of the West by virtue of their common though not invariable or absolutely identical dogma of God.

Western opinion must doubtless esteem every phase of Japanese phenomenal appeal and explanation, except the national dogmas of ancestor-worship, as mere superstition. Even in the quasi-dogma—certainly national—of the Emperor's divinity, we perceive only a phase of Japanese credulity, though we may admit that its effect is that of a national dogma, or even, within a limited sphere as it were, that of a universal dogma. But if the innumerable gods of Shinto and the whole calendar of Buddhist saints—usually invested with some of the attributes of gods—must, in the eyes of implacable Christianity, as in those of inexorable reason

itself, rank with Japanese astrology and divination as phantasies or eccentricities of superstition, we shall at least recognise that a superstition in the form and body of a god is a higher conception, since it represents a wider generalisation, than a superstition in the shape of a fanciful supposition of occult influence. Kwannon, the Buddhist goddess of mercy, who has scores of shrines and temples in Japan, is a higher concept than the inference of coming death taken from a dog's howling in the night. The Japanese people, when they have a boon to seek, invoke the gentle, many-handed goddess Kwannon, but some of them also apprehend a portent of death in the night-howling of a cur. A dogma of universal God affirms Him as the first cause of every boon and the ultimate origin of the law of death. To those who accept the dogma, both Kwannon and the howling cur are superstition, yet is it not proper to allow that Kwannon, as an explanation of phenomena, is a much higher and nobler concept than a howling cur? In presence of Kwannon we might almost admit a difficulty of determining where superstition ends and dogmatic religion begins, and the scientific Agnosticism of Europe, with the modern educated mind of Japan, proposes, in fact, to detect only a difference of degree between Kwannon and the dogma of a supreme and universal God.

Be this as it may, such a comprehensive definition of superstition as Christianity necessarily infers—a definition including, that is to say, all dogma or supernatural explanation which is merely particular and local, and which cannot and does not ultimately appeal to a universal God—this comprehensive definition nominates the mass of the Japanese people as among the most superstitious of the time. Always excepting

the educated ruling class, which alone truly represents modern Japan, the nation remains in the bondage of superstition, whether it be superstition as imaged in a Buddhistic hierarchy of saints and demons ; in a Shintoist catalogue of deified heroes ; in local genii ; in gods of mountains, woods, rivers, and valleys ; in animal species conceived as the special subjects of divine or demoniacal possession ; in occult arts, astrology, geomancy, divination, and the like ; in the use of amulets ; or in that most curious and most common of frailties, the attribution of esoteric significance to minute incidents, accidents, and coincidences of the daily round of life, a frailty to which the stoutest and most defiant minds of Europe have been known to make concessions.

This province of Japanese consciousness offers an indefinite number of inexhaustible mines of curious instances of the divagations of the human mind, unregulated and ungoverned in its search for explanations and causes, by the concept of a great 'first cause' in the shape of a dogma of universal God, or in the form of a logical inference of universal law. It is a province whose frontiers are always being readjusted in consequence of the encroachment, at some points of Christianity, and, at nearly every point, of the science, reason, and education of modern Japan. Modern Japan both hopes and affirms that it is a province which is destined to be wholly reclaimed from the power and the prestige of its present part-human, part-devilish, part-divine images and rituals, but modern Japan has not yet itself determined the precise form of authority wherewith it would replace the traditional hierarchies. This decision is for the future thought and policy of modern Japan. It is bound to be a somewhat critical decision.

To survey the province of Japanese superstition in its totality would be to write the history of the most curious and most mysterious phenomena of the mind of the Japanese people, a mind distinctively of its own kind, and distinctively of its own evolution. In the present era Japanese superstition is curious rather than important. It is not a moral force of the time in any but a negative or incidental sense. Its empire is indeed extensive and often firmly founded on the prejudices and prepossessions of the people; it permeates the habitudes of classes and overshadows the normal social activities and the common interests of the people; but it is hardly to be doubted that an Imperial decree, inspired by the educated and governing class, might, to-night or to-morrow, remove the most powerful god of the pantheon of superstition from his honourable place in that innumerable hierarchy. It is one of the peculiar attributes of the enlightened government of Japan that its writ may 'carry,' if it so will, alike over the serene and smiling plains of heaven and under the gloomiest and most baleful arches of hell. Were it not that the government's task upon earth still remains formidable, intricate, and responsible, there is little doubt that many a Japanese god, now, as ever, smug, secure, and complacent in the enjoyment of the obeisance of Japanese multitudes, would before now have been served with that writ of ejection from the pantheon which would have all the fatal effect of a warrant of execution. Japanese gods may congratulate themselves on the security which has accrued to them from the enormous difficulties of the Japanese revolution on earth. Time, however, is all against them—against the permanence of their present security. Their number is, indeed, considerable; the

usual estimate is 'eight hundred myriads'; but there is little safety in numbers when the batteries of modern Japanese science ultimately get into position against the embattled gods and demons of Japanese credulity and superstition.

A Japanese writer, evidently in sympathy with Christian ideas, may be quoted for such slight serious remark as Japanese superstition demands in any review of the truly potential motives composing the total moral force of the Japan of to-day. 'Popular belief [in the gods of superstition] has not changed among the mass of the people [the writer refers especially to the rural population]. To-day Kompira [whose principal shrine, in the island of Shikoku, is, perhaps, with that of Kwannon at Asakusa in Tokyo, the most celebrated in all Japan], Fudo at Narita [near Tokyo], Kwannon at Asakusa [in Tokyo], and Daishi at Kawasaki [near Yokohama], are held in high esteem, and on festival days men and women flock to these places like so many ants. One somewhat amusing thing is the fact that the gods believed in are made to change their functions in a most capricious manner. Gods whose office it formerly was to avert evil only have come to be relied on to bestow happiness, and so on. No useful end is served by wasting time in arguments as to the existence or non-existence of a god while so much superstition prevails. The proper course to follow is to endeavour to bring about the abolition of all objects of worship save one, which is no other than that mysterious all-pervading power that is inseparable from the Universe. Many attempts to bring back our people to the worship of one God have been made. But somehow or other' (the writer proceeds) 'to unthinking persons the idea that there are special beings waiting to supply their various wants

seems more natural than the conception that attributes to one Being omnipotence and omniscience. The founder of the Shin sect [Buddhist], with the hope of putting an end to superstition, taught his followers that Amida alone was to be worshipped. Other Buddhist reformers have attempted to bring about the same result. But no permanent change has been brought about. The tendency of the majority of priests [Buddhist] has always been to make use of existing superstitious beliefs for their own pecuniary profit rather than to strive to explode them. The Shinto priests are no better, as the existence to-day of such corrupt sects as the Tenri Kyokai and the Remmon Kyokai testify.'

The second of the two 'corrupt sects' named by this writer furnishes a modern instance of the vitality of Japanese superstition. Its founder, a woman, was born in 1831, and 'the special claim made by the preachers of the sect is that diseases, whatever their nature, are summarily healed in response to prayer.' The sect has a record of 'miracles,' and its vogue is considerable. 'It seems strange,' says a foreign commentator,<sup>1</sup> 'to find in the chief temple of a sect representing so much crudeness and superstition gas fixtures and a telephone, and to see in its magazine an illusive point in theology illustrated by the action of sulphuric acid on ammonia.' Perhaps it is stranger to think of eight hundred myriads of gods whose tenure of the functions of divinity is held practically at the will of the twentieth-century government of Japan.

It has been shown that beneath or behind the accumulation of superstitious concept and practice of the Shinto cult two ideas—it is just to the Japanese

<sup>1</sup> Dr. D. C. Greene, in the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*.

to regard them at least as 'forms of truth'—subsist in the full shape and to nearly all the effect of religious dogma—the divinity of the Emperor and the sacrosanctity of ancestors. The power and influence of these ideas in Japan may be justly stated as equal to the power and influence of the leading dogmas of Christianity in Europe. They are, in fact, universal dogma in Japan, or for the Japanese, and they are thus to be clearly differentiated in character and effect from the concepts represented by the unnumbered gods of the Shinto pantheon, which, as gods, are merely local, and, moreover, merely incidental objects of the people's regard.

Somewhat similarly, there is a kernel—there are kernels—of truth and dogma beneath the vast superstitious accumulations of Japanese Buddhism. It can never be denied that Buddhist teaching—the Buddhist view of 'truth'—has profoundly influenced the historical evolution of the Japanese character, and there is no doubt that its teaching—its kernel of truth—still powerfully modifies the Japanese method with life and the Japanese attitude towards life,—the method and attitude of the mass of the people,—though such modification may be always or most commonly in a negative sense or to a negative effect. Testimony is uniformly borne by every considerable publicist of modern Japan—the Japan which seeks as its dearest aim the evocation of positive individuality—to the pernicious effect—pernicious in the view of modern Japan—of Buddhist teleology, with its indisputable tendency to withdraw men's minds from their immediate environment and their responsible human tasks, and to centre their affections upon a heaven whose supreme bliss is mere nothingness. It might even be possible to prove that



the peculiarity which most distinguishes modern Japanese Agnosticism from the modern Agnosticism of Europe—its semi-pessimistic affirmation of the merely artificial importance of life—is only the reappearance, under new conditions of thought, of a trait of the Japanese mind and character which has been specially cherished by the traditional and historical Buddhism of Japan. The total effect of the dogmatic or quasi-dogmatic teaching of this Buddhism unquestionably is pessimistic, and the mere habit—if it be no more—of reference to a dogma of heaven, or the ultimate destiny of mankind—represented as an absorption into a universal unconsciousness—is not likely to be quickly abandoned after centuries of practice. Thus, if the gods and goddesses of Buddhism—Fudo, and Kwannon, and Kōmpira, with Shakyamuni himself, and many more—are, in truth, nothing but examples held aloft for the incidental and occasional appeal of the universal human instinct of superstition, and the universal human desire for external aids to virtue, it is certain that Japanese Buddhism possessed and still possesses some kernels of truth that are proven to be truth because they find a certain response in the fundamental being of that race of mankind of which the Japanese are a portion. It will not do—here or elsewhere—to dismiss Japanese Buddhism as a tottering fabric of human ignorance and credulity. A precious deposit of truth may indeed be buried under a vast superincumbent mass of superstitious idea and practice, but among the millions for whom its superstition is in fact everything that it is, there are not a few Japanese minds, competent and learned, who accept the moral dictates that spring from Buddhism's deposit of truth whenever or wherever it is relieved of the incubus of superstition.

## XVI

### MORAL SYSTEMS OF THE PAST

IN Europe, morality—in the wide sense of ‘ethics’—has always, until recent times, been regarded as the offspring, peculiarly and especially, of religion. To all intents and purposes religion and morality have been synonymous in the traditional thought of Europe since the general dissemination of Christianity. The dogma of original sin has of necessity impelled Christian theology to pronounce man incapable of original morality, and European philosophy in endeavouring, by the introspective or any other method, to explain or to account for moral ideas is inevitably inimical to European theology. Even the mediæval chivalry of Europe took or received its mandate from religion, and before the Reformation the political States of Europe, in theory at least, accepted the fact of their existence as a gift or as a function from the spiritual emperor in Rome. In Japan the empire of religion has never been extended over the whole sphere of human consciousness in the fashion of its universal jurisdiction, as exhibited in the history of European morality, since the appearance of Christianity.

To the present writer it seems that the difference in the European and the Japanese conception of religion—

its universal and despotic jurisdiction in the one case, and its merely incidental or extraneous function in the other—expresses the one truly profound distinction between the development of the Japanese historical consciousness and that of Europe, as well as the commensurately profound difference between the Japanese and the European method with life at the present day. In a later part of this volume an attempt is made to indicate the importance—the enormous importance—of this distinction in relation to the political evolution of Japan and as an aid to the exposition of the political significance of the modern movement and its future.

The Japanese have never known religion as the exclusive source of moral ideas, and, as has been shown, what religion they have known has not been that religion of imperious, inexorable, absolute dogma under the ægis of which European civilisation has grown and developed since the promulgation of Christianity. The sphere of Japanese consciousness dominated by religion has always been relatively small, and the symbols of its empire—in Europe rigid, vivid, and immobile dogma—have always been dim and vague and variable. Buddhism presents abstractions for dogma, and Shintoism refers man to his natural disposition for a moral law. In this absence of universal religious dogma the Japanese proved themselves, to some extent at least, capable of original morality, of moral ideas evolved, so to speak, from their own inner consciousness and not derived from religious dogma in the form of religious precept.

‘Bushi-do,’ sometimes spoken of by Japanese as the ‘soul of Japan,’ is the Japanese contribution of testimony to the capacity of mankind for original

morality. Bushi-do was the code of military conduct or morals in feudal times. As a kind of transcendental moral eidolon it is a powerful moral influence in the Japan of to-day.

Besides originating this human code the Japanese adopted one—that of Confucius—which was equally independent of the formative moral power of religious dogma. Confucianism in the ‘Old Japan’ occupied nearly all of that large part of the sphere of Japanese consciousness which was not appropriated by religious superstition or by Bushi-do—the code of military ethics. Though still influential as a moralist Confucius is quite discredited as a philosopher in modern Japan. He had indeed very little to say about the origin of the world and the ultimate *raison* of human institutions, but what he did say has become quite unimportant in the estimate of the educated Japanese mind for some time addicted to modern scientific explanations of phenomena. Confucian ethics survive, but the Confucian cosmogony is no more.

It is justly claimed by the Japanese that there is nothing in the West—no example in the realm of ideal morality—precisely resembling the Japanese code passing under the name of Bushi-do. The word means ‘The Way of the Warrior,’ and might be intelligibly rendered ‘Statutes of military conduct,’ though the code was never endowed with the precision and the definiteness of a catalogue of statutes. As a historical or traditional ideal, a kind of heritage of manliness, it wields an undoubted disciplinary sway over the Japanese mind—especially the mind of the all-important ruling class—of the present time. To its influence especially might be ascribed many of the incomparably noble instances of self-sacrificing valour with which the

records of the Japanese campaign against Russia were crowded. 'If religion be the source from which spring the motives of men's noblest actions,' says Captain Brinkley, 'then the religion of Japan was neither the law of Buddha nor the Path of the Gods [Shinto], but the Way of the Warrior [Bushi-do].' 'Bushi-do,' says Dr. Inazo Nitobe,<sup>1</sup> 'the maker and product of old Japan, is still the guiding principle of the transition, and will prove the formative force of the new era.' 'Unformulated,' says the same writer, 'Bushi-do was and still is the animating spirit of our country.'

Bushi-do has few clear and definite formulas or precepts. It is, as it were, a super-sensual code. In feudal times the precepts, such as they were, varied in different fiefs. 'Frugality, fealty, and filial piety' were the virtues which its subliminal influence evoked among the Japanese military class of pre-modern times. The practice—the acts—which it inspired had a quality of resolution and daring which furnished an extraordinary contrast to the unreality and indefiniteness of its subconscious precept. Loyalty to the territorial lord in innumerable instances impelled the warrior of old Japan to seek a voluntary death by a mode—the world-famous *seppuku* or *hara-kiri*—evidencing a power of self-command and a fund of physical endurance that would have been more than equal to the ordeal of the most heroic actions celebrated in European poetry and romance. The world, with a murmured commentary of 'fanaticism,' has beheld officers and men of the modern Japanese Army and Navy repeatedly uphold the lofty tradition of these

<sup>1</sup> In *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*—a somewhat rhapsodical little book, but interesting and doubtless in its main suggestions true.

acts in face of a European enemy. To link fanaticism with this loyalty to a lofty tradition is to traduce the character of a thousand heroes of old Japan, as well as to malign and misconstrue the battle-motive of the troops of the Japan of to-day. The Samurai of old Japan was a man of many civilised sensibilities; the modern Japanese officer is a man of culture. The truth is that in the Stoic habit of both we encounter the educative effect of a moral code in which the whole virtuous 'force' of which human nature is capable tended, and still tends, to be concentrated for the cultivation of one or two prominent and particular qualities. The Samurai was often erotically licentious; he was unlettered; he was proud, and contemptuous of the world of beings below him, the Japanese people; his vengeance was implacable, and his freedom with the lives of others often as careless as his indifference to his own. Consequently, as it might be said, he was preternaturally heroic, quixotically loyal, incredibly enduring, incorrigibly oblivious of all material values—the most astounding idealist the world has ever seen. His military virtues were extraordinary because his social vices were exaggerated. His character seems to illustrate in the sphere of human morals the law on which Spencer insisted as operative in the sphere of human physiology—that a concentration of force (in this instance moral force) into one channel implies its proportionate withdrawal from others. Our moral force, like our vital energy, is, it seems, a determinate quantity. The Japanese Samurai used up the whole of his in a successful effort to cultivate military virtues. He had little or none left for the cultivation of social morality.

Bushi-do survives in modern Japan in a shape even

less definite than that which it assumed in the minds of the ruling class in the purely military epochs, yet it is proper to name it an influential moral agent in the Japan of to-day. The depression—one might say the disappearance—of the military class as the crown of the social edifice has deprived the code even of that small measure of statutory certainty in which it was wont to be clothed. One hears nothing to-day of the children of Japanese officers of the staff being trained or inured from the dawn of consciousness to the easy contemplation of death and sights of blood, yet this was the earliest education of the Samurai child of feudal Japan.<sup>1</sup>

Bushi-do in the Japan of to-day is best compared to such a living tradition of conduct or *morale* as is cherished in the leading navies of the West, more especially, perhaps, in the navy of Great Britain. Or it might be alluded to somewhat as certain unwritten laws of conduct and behaviour are implied in the English term 'gentleman.' There is no question of a law of life and conduct dictated by obligations to religious doctrine, or to God, or to revealed truth. It might be defined as a conventional morality, elevated by association and tradition to the status of an idealism. In the official class it serves to keep alive a high standard of duty, which, however, is curiously liable to disappear under the pressure of certain temptations to poverty of practice. When the exigency demands it the Japanese official, whether as chief of a department of state or as a humble police constable, is usually capable of illustrating the highest standards of self-sacrificing devotion; yet under ordinary circumstances he is often prone to derelictions

<sup>1</sup> The war has shown, however, as already said, that the Samurai spirit lives on in the Japanese officer of to-day, even if, as a child, he is not specially educated in the Samurai code and practice.

that, trivial in their absolutely moral aspect, nevertheless render Japanese administrative methods more costly than they might be, and at the same time involve them in unnecessary loss of reputation. Many local and even some of the Imperial departments of government in Japan display an unhappily notorious capacity for the procrastination that engenders congestion of business, but in a crisis the humblest official may be expected to sacrifice his comfort, his feelings, or his life on the altar of duty. 'In my department,' said a Japanese Minister of State to a foreigner, 'I find that if I prompt the arm of my first secretary to execute a piece of business, he touches that of the second, the second that of the third, the third that of the chief of a bureau, the chief of the bureau that of his second-in-charge, and thus onwards to the commissioner, the piece of business finally disappearing out at the door.' The Japanese police constable, whose forebears are Samurai, when the occasion arises, approves himself a devotee whose sense of duty sometimes appears almost unhappy and uncomfortable to the Western instinct. On the other hand, Japanese officialdom's capacity for procrastination can be esteemed only through an experience of business relations with it. It is doubted only by such as have no opportunity of measuring it. Both the Japanese official and the Japanese constable are children of Samurai and the moral offspring of the Bushi-do code. Their total fund of virtue is concentrated for the creation and the cultivation of particular qualities. They are moral specialists whose special virtues are illustrious because their peculiar vices are exaggerated. In other words, the Bushi-do code, in its incidence, does not cover the total field of moral consciousness. It made the old Samurai a prodigy of valour and sometimes almost a monster of vice. Its



influence in modern Japan, in the degree in which it survives, has the same tendency to direct the moral force of its 'subjects' into one or two channels of special virtue. The sons of the Samurai threw away their lives in the war with Russia with an indifference which might be incredible had it not been established by innumerable examples. This heroic stoicism is a moral specialty produced by the Bushi-do code, assisted no doubt by other agencies and influences peculiar to the time and the crisis. The Bushi-do tradition lingers on in the mind of an exclusive section of the educated class of to-day, and through them it is not without effect upon the moral records of the nation as a whole. It is, nevertheless, an anachronism, like the code of the mediæval chivalry of Europe, or the code of 'honour' which sanctioned the duel in England down to recent time, as it still sanctions it in France. Even in Japan the interests and the responsibilities of men have widened so immensely that a narrow code, founded on a class tradition, however it may tend to engender brilliant moral abnormalities, tends to be discredited by the nation's increasing perception that a morality of special or critical occasions is insufficient. The Samurai was a narrow and limited character, and the tradition of conduct which he bequeathed to modern Japan only produces narrow and limited, if at the same time preternaturally or even uncomfortably brilliant virtues. Even Japan now perceives that it is not only by war that a State achieves greatness under modern conditions, and that a Samurai indifference to death does not of necessity connote a capacity for the onerous tasks of life. The world is still chivalrous enough to fling a wreath of bays upon the brows of the men who have so marvelously illustrated the special virtues of the Samurai code ;

but after war the world is not a whit more tolerant of the special faults of the Japanese official because he has proved that, as a soldier and a true son of the Samurai, he can die easily. Bushi-do is quite insufficient as a moral basis for modern Japan ; it is already a moral curiosity.

Confucianism in modern Japan has been involved in the wreck of the political system—that of Tokugawa Iyeyasu and his successors, the Shoguns of the pre-modern era—which found in it the moral sanctions of its despotism. The important social or family ethic—filial piety and the subordination of woman—which it helped to inculcate survives, indeed, in the Japan from which its political system has for ever disappeared, but this is rather by reason of the strength of usage and convention than because the Confucian precept maintains its ascendancy in modern Japan. The ‘five relations’ of the great Chinese moralist—Sovereign and Minister (sometimes rendered King and Subject), Father and Son, Husband and Wife, Elder and Younger Brother, and Friends (or Man to Man)—are no more the sacred canon of social practice that they were in the feudal Japan of the era from 1600 to 1850. If the structure and the instincts of Japanese society still in fact illustrate one or more of the ‘five relations,’ this is not because Confucius is the inspired sage of the new Japan as he was of the old, but rather because social institutions of traditional or ancient foundation survive long after the truths upon which they were founded are seen to be error. Confucian moral precepts are still, indeed, widely current as definitions of conduct, because they command the approval of conscience, but their doom as dogma was pronounced when the old feudal polity disappeared. Of Confucianism, as of Bushi-do, it may be said that

it has some present influence in Japan because of its enormous significance in the system of the pre-modern Japan. Like Bushi-do it has no future, because the system of pre-modern Japan has irrevocably disappeared. Japanese heads of families, especially among that portion of the upper class which contemplates the modern era without taking an active part in the making of its history, 'behave with generosity to the branches of their kindred, in order to illustrate harmony and benignity,' and 'exhibit clearly propriety and yielding courtesy in order to make manners and customs good,' or 'study to remove resentment and angry feelings in order to show the importance due to the person and life'; but even with them the practice of these and others of the Confucian maxims expresses their inherited instinct rather than their belief in an infallible prophet of morals. Among that portion of the upper class which presides over the destinies of the modern era conscience has displaced the moral system of Confucius; modern science has ousted his fragmentary and inconclusive physics; and Spencer, Comte, John Stuart Mill, Nietzsche, and other modern European sages have driven out Confucius, the political philosopher. For the mass of the Japanese people Confucius was never much more than a name, though indeed they are even to this day the unwitting children of Confucian formalism.

## XVII

### A MORAL CHAOS

THERE is, almost of necessity, a chaos of morals, or of moral standards, in Japan. The modern movement has been mainly intellectual, and not moral, in origin and motive, and its intellectual criticism has destroyed many of the sanctions of the old semi-Chinese moral system which subsisted side by side with the old Chinese intellectual system. There is perhaps an alternative to a postulate of the necessity of a moral reconstruction. The Japanese leaders, as well by their acts as by their speech, insist that only right or just thinking is necessary, and that this being given, right or just acting must naturally follow. They hold, in effect, that the spheres of intellect, or mind, and morality, or 'spirit,' are identical; that all morality is, in effect, an intellectual process. They exclude religion from educational curricula, but they teach rational ethics even in the elementary schools. They elevate State policy to a region above sects, by decreeing equality of opportunity and of privilege to all religions that do not tend to wean Japanese subjects from their political duty, or to oppose the obvious moral dictates of the educated intellect. For themselves they accept whatever explanation of phenomena the mind is capable of offering,

without hoping for illumination from supernatural sources.

Yet Japanese leaders, even of the first rank, confess a moral chaos in the country, and, on behalf of the nation, they deplore the lack of a new moral basis. For themselves they are content, because they have confidence in the sufficiency of the educated intellect. For the people, who are uneducated, they are anxious, because they see or foresee the total decay of the former moral system and the apparent impossibility of educating a poor nation of forty-eight millions up to the level of that serene confidence in the verdicts of the intellect upon which they themselves repose. For them, the leaders, the modern revolution has been wholly an intellectual movement ; but the people have often been required to consent to it, or to take their part in it, without any initiation into the intellectual reasons upon which it is based. The people have often been required to give up their old gods without receiving new ones at the hands of their leaders, or without being educated into a perception of the adequacy of the god of intellect and reason to which the leaders bow down. And the leaders, sometimes as if apparently conscience-stricken, allow that the case of the people, ignorant and yet godless, is hard.

Bushi-do survives as an ideal moral tradition among the intellectual class. Often it is mere nationalism or loyalty ; at most it is no more than a sub-conscious subscription to the obligations of conduct inherent in the Japanese equivalent for 'gentleman.' Confucianism in modern Japan is no more than, if as much as, the observance by the educated class of a few admirable rules for the elevation and improvement of the social relations. For the mass of the people there is Buddhist

and Shintoist superstition, beneath whose immense superincumbent weight a few kernels of moral truth scarcely survive for the intellect acute enough to discern them or the courage daring enough to rescue them.

A universal despotism—that of the feudal polity as organised by the Tokugawa Shoguns—has disappeared, taking with it the moral system which, by the mere exercise of its despotic power, it was able to impose and maintain. Its rigid class system—itsself a moral system, for each class had a code or tradition of conduct regulating its relations with the others—has disappeared; its penetrating paternalism, with absolute powers of prescription and proscription in the spheres of morals and politics, is not possible in modern Japan, even if it were not a necessary design of the leaders of the modern era to educate the nation to act for itself. In a word, there is a moral chaos, as there is, in one sense, a political chaos.

There are one or two powerful elements of stability. The dogma of the Emperor's divinity has been revived, ensuring a 'fixed idea' in the realm of politics, and in some degree in the realm of morals, for loyalty, or nationalism, when it assumes the intense form and function of a religion, is bound in some degree to regulate conduct. And ancestor-worship, linked with the dogma of Imperial sacrosanctity, also survives in a vivid and definite shape of power that entitles it almost to rank with dogma.

Yet an extensive portion of the sphere of the nation's consciousness is involved in chaos, for Bushi-do can no longer regulate the whole conduct of the class which accepted it as law, since that class—as a specifically defined class with limited avocations—has dis-

appeared. Confucianism for the people was never more than a collection of social conventions which are now seriously assailed by the army of new ideas from the West; and suspicion and distrust of Buddhism are communicated to the masses by the attitude of indifference and contempt assumed towards it by their leaders.

The nation's soul is astray, wandering in the deserts of negation, seeing but one lone star in the heavens—their sovereign—guided by a single instinct—consciousness of a destiny. When was this spectacle seen in history?

The chaos is admitted by most of the Japanese leaders. Count Okuma says: 'The material civilisation of the West has been largely introduced into Japan in the last forty years, but our mental and moral education has not kept pace with our material progress. Ethics are included in our school curricula, but they are formal. There is not a single moral standard to which the people can adhere.' Says Baron Iwasaki: 'Simultaneously with the reconstruction of our social order, the former system of morality received a death-blow, and a new system of manners and morality, adapted to the requirements of the new order of things, has yet to be established. . . . It must unfortunately be admitted that the good moral tone of old Japan has altogether disappeared, and what we have lost in the process of transition we have not yet succeeded in replacing by the moral tone of European countries.' A multitude of such utterances might be quoted. The facts to which they are testimony might be inferred without their aid, for a revolution which originates in the intellect of a country, in its very nature does not provide substitutes for the moral sanctions of society

which its intellectual criticism ultimately destroys. In the end it inevitably invades the region of morals, and its most difficult task is to plant a new authority—a new moral system—in the place of that authority which its intellectual attack destroys. The content of the Japanese educated class with the verdicts of intellect is explicable enough. They observe that an intellectual revolution has achieved unprecedented success—a success more wonderful, in its material aspects, than that which has attended any emotional or spiritual upheaval in history. Almost inevitably they infer that intellect or reason is the only necessary thing. On the other hand they cannot but observe that among the uneducated masses intellect is secondary, and sense or sensibility—emotion and devotion—primary. Themselves satisfied with intellect because it has accomplished so much, they must nevertheless admit that it is too much to expect the people, who have little or no intellect—certainly no educated intellect—to exhibit the same composure.

The problem is essentially a problem the solution of which lies in the Japanese future. Is a new moral basis necessary, and if so, where is it to be found, or how created? Is the popular instinct for religion the sure key to the solution of the problem, or can the Japanese leaders succeed in initiating the people into the secret of their own satisfaction with the verdicts of intellect and the promptings of conscience?

Possibly it may be open to question if the moral *laches*, of which whole sections of society in modern Japan are guilty, are certainly or wholly to be referred to the decay and disappearance of former moral standards. A more correct diagnosis would probably trace the evil to the disappearance of the political and



social despotism—that of the Tokugawas—which, by repression or by formalism, exercised the functions of a positive moral canon without there being in fact any positive moral canon in operation. The morality of old Japan, such as it was, was rather a morality of official regulation than a morality of the private or individual conscience, and the disappearance of the authority that imposed and maintained the official regulation represented, not so much the lapse of a moral system, as the disappearance of a despotism whose paternal function and method envisaged the regulation of morals. Paternalism is still extraordinarily characteristic of governing method in Japan, but it no longer presumes to usurp the functions of conscience, except as these may be regulated by education.

Perhaps, then, to the disappearance of a despotism rather than to the decay of a moral canon should be ascribed such blemishes of the Japanese body politic as are witnessed by the widespread corruption of part of the official and almost the whole political class of the country,<sup>1</sup> and the equal laxity and moral facility of its commercial class. Parallels or comparisons with Western States are not specially pertinent in this matter. Japan is a poor country, and men who are willing to traffic in their honour are at any rate guarded, if only by lack of opportunity, from the possibility of achieving enormities comparable with leading examples that might be quoted from the records of the great States of the West. It is the width of the area over which Japanese moral obliquity is often found to occur—it is its ramifications, so to speak—that are remarkable. Japanese

<sup>1</sup> It is necessary to exclude the highest and the lowest ranks of the Japanese official class from this indictment. The Japanese leaders, in their public character, are always above reproach; Japanese policemen can never be got to accept a *pourboire*.

administrative records, national and local, of recent years have been perhaps unduly productive of 'scandals.' These records may not, that is to say, be accepted as a fair criterion of the average *morale* of Japanese administration; but, in truth, the single instance of a great school text-book scandal in 1902 and 1903 might be cited as proof that Japan is almost in a class by herself in point of administrative venality. Upon the discovery that publishers of school-books were able to suborn the patronage of school officials, investigation disclosed a vast and complicated scheme of bribery under which officials of every grade, including members of the National Diet, highly placed servants of district governments, supervisors and inspectors, and school teachers themselves, had consented to share the gains of publishers the adoption of whose school-books they recommended or secured. The 'scandal,' by some who were deeply concerned—or professed themselves deeply concerned—for the welfare of the existing *régime*, was held almost to justify impeachment of the entire system and method of the Education Department of the Executive Government,<sup>1</sup> but in fact a 'case,' which singly would have sufficed to condemn a *régime* in some Western States, soon took a merely historical place in a series of 'scandals' which the nation, in an era of moral chaos, was and is incapable of measuring in their true moral perspective.

Were it not that there is a more adequate palliation—or, at least, a clearer explanation—of the facts in the case of Japan, a Western critic might be charged with invidiousness in emphasising this phase of the domestic records of the Japan of to-day. There is

<sup>1</sup> It should be said that no imputation was even hinted against the Minister of Education of the time, Baron Kikuchi, a graduate of Cambridge.

little excuse, besides the excuse of human weakness, for such instances of venality as are from time to time brought to light in the administrative and political records of European and American States. In the case of Japan there is an explanatory if not a palliating national event—the sudden disappearance of a despotism which stood in the place and exercised the function of a moral system. There was immense benefit and there is immense promise in this event; there was also immense loss and disaster. The intellect of a country was set free, but many of its moral ideas were involved in ruin. No Western State perhaps holds the promise of Japan's future, yet none has known such disaster as Japan's immediate past has brought upon Japan's moral system.

These inferences are to be noted when it is asserted—as it must be asserted—that subordinate sections of the administrative class of Japan are often venal, the political class unusually corrupt, and the commercial class commonly given to indirect and evasive methods and practices. Furthermore, journalistic morality has but a few important or consistent examples in the entire press of the country.

One might perhaps easily paint or suggest a picture of this moral chaos in colours too dark to consist with the total effect of conditions whose most permanent characteristic is that they are always undergoing change. It may be permissible, in the circumstances, to allow respectable Japanese authorities to speak for themselves and for the country in a question so manifestly important and withal so difficult.

A year or two since—in 1901 to be precise—the *Taiyo*, perhaps the best and certainly the most respectable and authoritative example of review journalism

in the Japanese press, published the opinions of a number of well-known men on the 'corruption of the times,' which few if any of them attempted to deny or to excuse. To this symposium we find a former Minister of Justice, Mr. Kiyoura Keigo, contributing the following observations: 'The moral code of the old Samurai, known as *bushi-do*, has been abandoned, and men have come to think that any conduct which is not illegal is allowable. Putting aside, for the nonce, the state of the lower orders, I should say that in the middle class there is a prevailing abuse in their ceaseless aping of social superiors. Their time is spent in trying to appear other than they are, and the extravagance into which the nation has been betrayed of late years enables them to do this with a certain amount of success. The remedy for this evil lies in bringing education and religion—especially the latter—to bear on life and thought. . . . What is wanting among the moral influences brought to bear on this class is the inculcation of public spirit. This, as known among us, is still but a feeble germ. Then the part played by the newspapers as leaders and representatives of public opinion is anything but a noble one. Many of them do not aspire to be the organs of an unbiassed public opinion. They descend to personalities and to pettiness, and are frequently guilty of the grossest exaggeration.' A member of the Upper House of the Diet—the House of Peers—says: 'One of the most effective remedies for the evils of society is the raising of woman to her proper rank. Many meetings have been held at which women's rights have been canvassed, but the trouble is, that not even the persons who figure most prominently in the movement carry out in private life the precepts which they preach. To speak

in favour of treating women differently is easy enough, but to act differently towards the women with whom we come into daily contact is quite another matter.' Another member of the House of Peers asserts that 'the most urgent of all reforms is a change in the mode of life among our politicians. The reckless manner in which these men spend money is the cause of the corruption that exists in so many lines of life.' A surgeon-general of the army, Baron Ishikuro, thinks extravagant living 'the great evil of the time.' An elaborate and analytically interesting opinion is given by Dr. Tomizu Hiroto. He states: 'One of the reasons for the present moral degeneration is that the basis of our traditional moral system was never a very good one. The foundation of our system may be said to be the loyalty of inferiors to their superiors, of servants to their masters. This is only a portion of what is known in the West as public duty. Consequently Japanese ideas of what is required of them as citizens are far behind those of the average European or American. The remedy for our defective morality is in the hands of two Departments of State—that of Justice and that of Education. . . . Christianity prevails in every part of the Western world, and in most countries its teaching is relied on for moral culture. But Christianity is of little value as a teacher of ethics, as nobody who is well-informed seriously believes in it (*sic*). . . . It is quite certain that in the twenty-first century Christianity, as now taught, will cease to be the basis of the moral instruction imparted in schools throughout the Western world. The moral tone of schools is very closely connected with the character of the textbooks in use. This point deserves the greatest attention in this country. There is no religion in Japan

suitable to the real wants of the nation. Confucianism is defective in that it neglects to teach man his duties as a citizen. Buddhism is pessimistic, and failed in India on that account, as it must fail here. Shintoism does not possess the characteristics of a religion. Christianity is logically defective, and not to be relied on. The Department of Education should appoint a committee to prepare a new set of text-books. [The anti-climax is peculiarly Japanese.] The efficiency of the Department of Justice is impaired by the lack of facilities for discovering and punishing crimes committed by the higher classes of society.' Viscount Torio Koyata gives this view: 'What is called "the corruption of society" consists for the most part of the bribery of officials. This practice, in my opinion, owes its wide prevalence to lack of appreciation by the public of the dignity and responsibilities of Ministers of State. . . . It is the low public estimate of the character and general qualifications of Ministers of State that is at the root of existing corruption.' Viscount Kawase is a single example of comparative and somewhat curious complacency. 'When customs change,' he says, 'it often seems as though society were growing lax when it is not really so. A great deal of fuss is made about bribery, but few people have a clear idea as to what a bribe is. English Members of Parliament do not receive salaries, but they are in receipt of from £2000 to £4000 a year in the form of commissions (*sic*). Though bribery is universally condemned in England, the giving and receiving of commissions is considered a harmless practice. In Japan we are needlessly sensitive on the subject.'

The tenor of most of these views accords with the inferences that might naturally be drawn from the fact of

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the dissolution of a despotism which was moral as well as political ; which was, therefore, in itself an ethical system as well as a political order. The pertinent question is that of the creation of a new moral authority. There is, as will be evident, immense confusion and variety of opinion on the question in Japan.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One may admit that the conduct of the nation during the war with Russia could scarcely be cited in substantiation of some of the conclusions stated in this chapter. In reality, however—as it seems to the writer—the people's behaviour during the war, and that of the Government and the Army in its conduct, support the suggestion that Japan's native and original code of morals—the Bushi-do code—though it engender an admirable morality of special occasion, can never be of general application. War, of course, is special and extraordinary. Conditions of peace, not conditions of war, are normal.

## XVIII

### THE JAPANESE MIND

THE Japanese mind has its own outlook upon life and its own esteem of death. In the West the being of all our nations is at heart one. Analyse us and we may almost be reduced to a common element, whether of feeling or of thought. French, Germans, Greeks are born every year in England of English parents; future Americans are being rocked in a thousand German cradles. Japan is different. She has her own outlook upon life and her own esteem of death.

Yet it seems there is every reason to believe that it is not the essence or foundation of the Japanese mind that is different. When the surface of things is probed in Japan—in Japanese conventions of to-day or in Japanese history—a substratum of phenomena is struck that always suggests the geological formation of the European mind. It then seems that the Japanese must be a race of Western Europe which happens to have appeared on the Eastern fringe of Asia. It seems necessary to allow a very clear distinction between the human mind in its original primal quality and its accumulated deposit of experience. In the records of peoples there is nothing so salient as their native genius; and, were it only from the case of Japan, it is to be inferred that history is in nowise an infallible



record of capacities, and that, equally, its lessons and its principles are at best a dubious index of the future. In truth, there is probably more originality in human genius than we have been disposed to allow. What is chiefly wanted is a severance from historical environment. The genius of peoples accepts the education of their history; whereas, were it as easily possible for peoples as it is for individuals to cast adrift from their traditional environments, it is probable that we should observe the same variety of genius among races that we contemplate day by day among the individuals composing them.

The case of Japan—historical and contemporary—seems, upon inquiry, to be the case of a European mind with accidental or fortuitous differences of record and experience, crystallising into peculiarities of habit and custom, which in their unique character deceive the eye so as to make it report a unique race which, after all, is merely a race snatched away from the ancestral environment of the European family at a very early age. We feel—we perceive—that fundamental identity of mind-substance is not incompatible with immense variety of psychological experience. The authority—nay, the bare possibility—of the absolute or final, whether in history or in philosophy, in religion or in politics, is constantly challenged by Japan. Especially is it challenged by the Japanese mind in its relation to Japanese records and Japanese conventions. The eccentricity of these records and these conventions becomes insignificant and unimportant beside the impressive and suggestive fact that there is no essential eccentricity in the Japanese mind behind them. Almost we are compelled to think that forms of religion, forms of politics, even forms of philosophy, are forms of

convention, forms of experience, or, at the utmost, forms of expression.

The Japanese mind may be less original than that of Europe; its compass may be less extensive or less profound; it may be apprehensive rather than comprehensive, acute rather than imaginative, destructive rather than constructive, analysing rather than generalising. But if we are able to announce differences, do we not thereby affirm a fundamental identity? The mere circumstance that we can recognise or classify the attributes of the Japanese mind confirms its affinity with ours. And, in fact, the average 'foreigner' is always able to reason calmly with the average Japanese. Cause and effect, consequence and inference, are at bottom of the same quality and cogency in matters of fact in Japan as in Europe. There are accidental or incidental differences as to the weight and the incidence of evidence or premises; but the Japanese method in syllogisms is ultimately the same as the European. We differ truly in our estimate of certain of the values of life; but the process or method by which the Japanese arrives at his estimate is precisely that by which we arrive at ours. In other words, it is only in the order of our arguments that we are unlike; that is to say, our respective historical experience has been different. We have each been taught by our particular experience to lay particular stress on different data of life. There is the same difference in the estimate of values prevailing in different classes of Western societies. The poor reason from cause to effect, from premise to conclusion, as do the rich; but the cause is not the same; therefore a different effect is contemplated; the premises being of another kind, there is another conclusion.

Subject to the effect of dissimilarities of experience, the Japanese mind is European. The wonder is that the effect of a dissimilarity of events—these being conceived as history or experience—should be so great. This formidable effect is witnessed in differences of institutions, of ethics, categories of thought, even relations of things. Ultimate rational identity is clearly proved by the Japanese capacity of judging between Japanese institutions, Japanese ethics, categories of thought, relations of things, and those of Europe. By virtue of this capacity it is evident that the Japanese mind weighs advantages by criteria the same in kind as those which appear in the operation of the European mind. Reforms of procedure are often resorted to merely at the behest of the instinct of self-preservation. Japan's modern era—conceived as a reform of procedure—is more than a device aiming at self-preservation. It is a triumph of reason. It is a success of judgment, not of instinct.

No eccentricity or dissimilarity of habit or of practice has any importance beside the governing fact of the identity of the Japanese logical method with the European. Differences of temperament, of capacity, of genius, are not of vital consequence, being subject to the direction and discipline of the same imperious method. Japan submits—she has submitted—the entire fabric of her polity to the test of the European method, but the truth is, she would never have done this—she would never have done this with success so astounding—had not that method been fundamentally her own. Accretions of eccentric habit, accumulating in course of centuries of isolation, did not kill the kernel of true reason in the sub-soil of her mind. The achievements of modern Japan have been reared on a base of true

reason. They could not otherwise have withstood the shocks to which they have been subjected. Their success alone is almost a sufficient proof of an essentially logical, essentially reasonable quality in the Japanese mind. We may be sure that this quality, often in danger of submergence, sometimes submerged, by special eccentricities of mental habit, has been secure of a dominion, on the whole, and in vital affairs, unfettered throughout the Japanese epoch of modern reform. It is not otherwise possible to account for the stability, the demonstrated stability, of that epoch.

Even when there seems to be an eccentric attitude towards facts it is almost always possible to detect a logical procession of ideas. A perfect synthesis may lead to an apparently capricious, or even to a clearly invalid conclusion, the caprice or the invalidity of the conclusion being referable not to the method of the synthesis, but to the nature of its constituents. Thus even to-day it is the custom in Japan to charge a large purchaser a greater amount per unit of his purchase than is exacted from the buyer of a single article. The reasoning is that the large purchaser, by the mere fact of his large purchase, proves that his means are equal to paying a larger price per unit of his purchase than the buyer who is able to bargain for a single example only. The synthesis is perfect; the reasonableness is reasonable. But the elements of the synthesis are different. In other words, the Japanese merchant's attitude towards the facts is different. There is a logical procession of ideas, but because some of them are, from our point of view, invalid ideas, they lead to what in the European view is an invalid conclusion. The method is rigidly logical. It is, in fact, the European method, but it categorises values in a different and to us an absurd ratio. The

paramount value, in our synthetical method with this class of facts, is the nature of the bargain between the persons ; the Japanese mind has been accustomed in the past to place the persons above the bargain. Our view is that the business done, or to be done, is all or nearly all the matter. The Japanese view is that the parties to the proposed business, their motive, their means, their relation to the facts, are more truly valid and more truly important. And this method of appraisal is ultimately derived from the social canon of the country, with its extreme obligations of courtesy and consideration towards persons as such. In truth, our social canon and our European method all through tend to establish abstract principles of reason where the Japanese canon and method award to the social relationships a governing place over all abstract principles. These latter are none the less known and admitted ; the Japanese mind, already apprehending them, needs only to be educated to admit them to a regnant function in the assortments of life, and the identity of the Japanese method, fundamentally the same as the European, becomes sensibly and ostensibly the same.

If, indeed, then it be true that the Japanese mind has its own outlook upon life, and its own esteem of death, it is not to be concluded that its method is therefore unlike that of the European mind. The only difference is the difference of historical experience, with some consequent disagreement as to values and relations. The Japanese educated mind of to-day discusses abstract propositions—in philosophy, in politics, in morals—with the same appreciation of weak and of cogent arguments as is inherent in the method of the educated mind of Europe. It may open the argument—it probably does open the argument—with different prepossessions or

different sympathies affecting its view of the value of logical results, but this divergence is obviously unconnected with method which, after all, is the truly important affair.

Elsewhere in this volume reason is shown for a proposition that the truly profound chasm of difference between the Japanese mind, or its history, and that of Europe, occurs especially in the absence throughout the whole course of the record and development of the Japanese consciousness of religious dogma in the hard, immobile form peculiar perhaps to Christianity. In this absence occurs the only significant difference between the experience of the race-mind of Japan and that of the race-mind of Western Europe; from this difference, from its effects, has occurred an immense divergence between the estimate of material values, made respectively by the Japanese mind and the mind of Europe,—a divergence often so great and peculiar that it is difficult to believe that it does not signify a real difference of logical method. The philosophic historian or the scientific sociologist disposed to challenge the importance of Christian dogma in the evolution of Western civilisation—apart from fundamental logical method, which may or may not be the soul of a civilisation—has immense difficulties to encounter in explaining many phenomena and institutions of Japanese civilisation which appear to occur solely through the absence of Christian dogma, especially the dogma of a universal omnipotent God.

The immense difference between the Japanese estimate of values—resulting, as the writer believes, almost wholly from the difference of idea or dogma in regard to the transcendental background of life, in regard to God, that is to say, and death and ultimate causation generally—this difference, in truth, only conceals a fundamental

identity of logical method. 'Japanese minds,' says a representative of modern educated Japan, 'under the double tutelage of the Confucian philosophy and the Shinto cult, have been accustomed to regard virtue apart and by itself. So much so that the idea of doing good from fear of punishment or hope of reward is deemed unworthy of a noble nature.' Here is seen the effect—an incidental effect—of the different experience of the race-mind of Japan under the dominion of a different concept of that which ultimately is God, or the idea of God. How great is the difference in the estimate of values which proceeds from it! So great is this difference that often it appears to represent a difference of logical method, or even, as it were, a difference of mind-substance. All that it truly connotes is a difference of position, point of view, or premise. In the case of the shopkeeper who decides that the large purchaser should pay the higher price, the Japanese mind exhibits the effect of a canon of ultimate causation which places the social relationship above abstract principles of justice. God—the God of European consciousness—stands chiefly for justice in the European mind, and perfect justice is perfect logic. The Japanese, without the European idea of God, have forgotten or ignored perfect justice and perfect logic, but fundamentally the difference is merely one of position or point of view, not of method.

That in its original or fundamental quality—in its method, that is to say—the Japanese mind is virtually identical with the European might well, as has been indicated, be accepted as proved by the single but greatly impressive fact of its successful eclecticism in the choice of practices, of rules, and of institutions from the *mélange* of European civilisation. For equally impressive demonstrations of the thoroughly European 'sanity' of

the Japanese mind one need not perhaps go beyond the current literature of the country, or the deliberations of its public assemblies. One never finds here the ludicrous presentation of inept arguments and fantastic conclusions characteristic of the only other Asiatic mind which has had equal opportunity of contact with European method—the Babu mind of India. The better-class journals of Japan discuss the most modern problems of politics, morals, sociology, religion, and what not, with a comprehensive justice certainly equal to that of the best press writers of Europe. Here, chosen at random, is a pronouncement by a Japanese periodical on indiscriminate charity: ‘That more harm than good is done by numerous bodies, whose express object it is to help the poor, is an undoubted fact. How to help the poor without increasing poverty is a problem not easily solved. Perhaps those who do most harm as dispensers of charity are religious people who, under the influence of emotion, scatter gifts right and left indiscriminately, more as a gratification to their own feelings than out of regard to the worthiness of the objects of their charity. In an age when charity is fashionable, and when the names of almsgivers are blazoned abroad to the encouragement of vanity in thousands of instances, the results of help given are not looked into, and blind distribution goes on with its deadly work of undermining that independence of spirit which is one of the finest of all moral traits. Charity should be separated from religion. . . . When people are in want there is great danger of their pretending to believe what in their hearts they reject, for the sake of the temporary aid to be received. . . .’ This, it will be seen, is precisely the case that would be made—that frequently is made—by the critic of indiscriminate charity in the West. The same judgment



and 'balance' are to be found leading to equally sound conclusions in Japanese discussions of the most abstruse metaphysical questions, wherever and whenever the mind of the country is educated to ignore the prepossessions engendered by the special experience of the race-mind in its historical evolution under the ægis of a conception of ultimate things, which is fundamentally different from the same conception in Europe.

Perhaps there is no finer or more conclusive testimony to the identity of Japanese logical method with that of Europe, when it is free to operate in entire independence of race prepossessions and prejudices, than the canon underlying the Japanese art instinct. In this sphere the mind of Japan, like that of Europe, operates, or has operated, free and untrammelled. In the result the fundamental canons of Art emerge identical in Japan and in the West. The conditions of true Art, as they would be stated—as they have been stated—by the best minds of the West are displayed in a writing of a Japanese art critic of the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The critic is discussing sword furniture—a field to whose cultivation the Japanese chisel artist gave a wealth of laborious genius—and he discusses ultimate motives to this effect:<sup>1</sup> 'It is impossible for a man to be great in art and mercenary at the same time. The common craftsman, as he bends over his task, is for ever estimating the wage it will bring. Thus the taint of covetousness is inevitably transferred to his work, constituting a feature which becomes more and more repellent as time goes by, and finally banishes the specimen to some degraded shop of a dealer in old metal. The true artist, though conscious that he toils for a living, has his recollection of the fact

<sup>1</sup> Translation in Brinkley's *Japan*, vol. vii.

effaced by love for his work. At times he will lay aside his chisel for months, if he finds that his heart is not in his work. When the inspiration arrives, however, he becomes so completely absorbed in his task that he cannot bear to lay it aside, day or night, until it is finished. There is vitality in the result : it is surpassingly good. . . . A great artist is injured when the price of his work is discussed : it should be above price.' Here, in a sphere in which of necessity there is no intrusion of peculiar or special psychic experience, to hinder or to modify the half-instinctive conclusions of mind, a canon of art is evolved identical with that of Europe.

Method, or logic, is the true standard of psychological values. Given identity of logical method in the Japanese and the European mind, and differences of aptitude or inclination cease to be very important. Foreign observers commonly agree that the Japanese mind is deficient in inductive power—that its particularity, or capacity for detail, is counterbalanced by a deficiency of the power to generalise. This, perhaps, is the most serious defect that could be charged against it if it be not possible—as the writer does not believe it is possible—seriously to impugn its method. Insistence on particular or isolated aspects of cases, denoting a failure to perceive the general or comprehensive inferences these aspects suggest, is frequently noticed in Japanese legal pronouncements, in the harangues of politicians, and even in discussions incidental to the ordinary business of life in Japan. This is probably a failure or deficiency of imagination rather than of mental acumen, and in fact we find that the Japanese mind in all its history has been peculiarly barren of achievements of philosophy, the sublimest fruit of

imagination, while to-day, though it is addicted to analytical labours that have already yielded valuable results in the field of practical science, modern metaphysical speculation has as yet no substantial contribution to acknowledge from the Japanese mind. It is not improbable that the European imagination—broad, high, and deep—owes much to the breadth, the height, and the depth of the dogmatic conceptions to which Christianity introduced it. Untutored by these splendidly comprehensive ideas the Japanese mind has developed the capacity for detail and analysis rather than the power of synthesis and construction.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The author feels that he need hardly pursue further a subject the discussion of which must necessarily be abstruse and technical almost at any point. Whether its discussion, however competent and informed, would throw any truly valuable light on Modern Japan, regarded as a historical phenomenon, may be doubted, for so great an authority on questions of this kind as John Stuart Mill has said (and he is endorsed by Buckle) that 'of all vulgar modes of escaping from the consideration of the effect of social and moral influences on the human mind, the most vulgar is that of attributing the diversities of conduct and character to inherent natural differences.' This is to say, that there is no such psychological 'quantity' as a 'race-mind'—Japanese or other, and that all discussions of the mental characteristics of races are valuable only as they are inferred from or modified by the 'social and moral influences' in the historical evolution of races. So much as this the present writer postulates by inferring that the apparent peculiarities of the Japanese race-mind are really only peculiarities of historico-psychological 'experience,' while he has at the same time attempted in other papers of the present volume to display some of the 'moral and social influences' composing or affecting the total consciousness of the Japan of to-day. Yet he may be allowed to say that it seems to him that even the authority of Mill is hardly sufficient to dispose of a hypothesis for which the case of Japan seems a peculiarly strong warrant. A fundamental identity as between the Japanese mind and that of Western Europe is indeed, he believes, demonstrable; but is it not singular that this identity should be discernible despite the extraordinary differences of 'social and moral influences'—otherwise of 'experience'—as between Europe and Japan? It seems that there is a residuum of 'race-mind' not amenable to the power of 'social and moral influences,' and from this might properly be inferred a probability which seems to the present writer to be suggested by the analogy of the dissimilarities of individual mind and character—the probability, namely, that there *are* 'inherent natural differences' in the mental constitution of races.

In supplement of his own observations the writer may quote a Japanese analysis of the Japanese mind (by Takei Tamotsu, translated by Mr. W. Denning in the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, vol. xvi.). This Japanese psychologist gives us his view of the constituents of mind. He says: 'We have, I. Experience—

consisting of (1) sensation, (2) attention, (3) conception ; II. Memory—verbal and rational ; III. Reflective Power, consisting of (1) imagination or speculation, and (2) investigation or inquiry. Speculation itself asks the how and the why of things that exist. It is divided into two parts, one being called Fancy and the other Rational Imagination. Fancy depends on feeling. It can never make much progress or effect much good. But rational imagination is the forerunner of all invention. The inquiring spirit only comes into existence when the faculty of rational imagination is fully developed.

‘In the first place (the writer proceeds), we find that in the Japanese mind there is no lack of Sensation ; but in the Attention and Conception which should follow it, it is very deficient. Again, although the Japanese mind has no ordinary amount of verbal memorising power [this is commonly and no doubt rightly ascribed to the educative effect of memorising thousands of Chinese ideographs], it is very weak in what is called Rational Memory. Although there is no lack of Fancy, Rational Imagination is very deficient ; and as for the Inquiring Spirit, it is at such a low ebb that practically it is non-existent. [This is not in accord with many prominent evidences in the Japan of to-day.] The results of our investigation then are as follows : deficiencies, five, viz. Attention, Conception, Rational Memory, Rational Imagination, and Inquiry ; non-deficiencies [*sic*], three, viz. Sensation, Verbal Memory, and Fancy.

‘For the obtaining of the fruits of the Understanding (the writer concludes) it is absolutely necessary that the eight processes sketched above should be faithfully followed (? cultivated). But it seems as though the cultivation of the Japanese mind had been confined to the development of Sensation, Verbal Memory, and Fancy.’

## XIX

### THE NATION AND THE MODERN ERA

It is of importance to know how or in what degree the events of the last forty years in Japan have affected the essential idiosyncrasy of the Japanese people. Though they may not revolutionise or transmute national character, upheavals like that of which Japan has been the theatre must evidently represent at least the addition of an enormously important fact to the psychological equipment of a people. So 'intense' an experience could not fail to make a deep impression on the nation's consciousness, and thereby to reinforce or diminish their armoury of psychological 'capacities.' Power, in all the variety of its shapes, is often an art deduced from experience, and in the case of the Japanese it is well to remember that they are the people of a unique 'experience,' an 'experience' such as has been vouchsafed to no other contemporary people. Superimposed on the structure of their native character and genius there is the invisible image of an extraordinary moral and material event. Interwoven with the substance of their psychic or historical being this event might help to illumine, or to discipline, or to inspire a people; or to harass, enervate, and exhaust them. It could hardly fail to take its place in their

prospect and retrospect as a very potent and significant fact.

Much depends from the character of an 'experience' such as that which has taken its place in the psychical record of the Japanese nation. That the event, or series of events, of the modern era in Japan guarantees to the people of the country possession of an experience unlike any in the records of contemporary peoples is affirmed by all the facts. No other people has emerged from the shadow of a feudal polity into the light of representative or quasi-representative institutions in two decades. No other people has lived in seclusion from the world for two centuries and a half, building up a peculiar yet a comparatively high civilisation, to be suddenly introduced—introduced almost without any preliminary educative process—to a civilisation radically different in principle, immensely more prolific in results, and representing, in fact, the cumulative effort of a whole system of peoples dowered from the beginning of their attempt with the great examples of Greece and Rome, and inspired by a religion in its fundamental attitude towards phenomena altogether differentiated from that which Japan had known. No other people had equal cause for pride in their individual, isolated achievement—none, it may be said, has been equally proud of its achievement; yet none has been compelled to bow so humbly before the massive achievement of the world from which it sought seclusion; none, perhaps, had accepted with a better grace the necessity of this humility. The Japanese, in their modern era, are constantly swayed by two influential motives, which are very nearly emotions—pride of their achievement in their isolation; chagrin of the defects of this achievement. Both vanity and humbleness enter into

their attitude towards Europe ; they behold themselves as exemplars the while they accept the rôle of copyists.

If we admit that the modern 'experience' of the Japanese—whether we name it 'revolution' or 'transformation'—is unique, we of necessity imply that they are capable of a unique future. It is important to appreciate this inference. Nothing is so interesting about Japan as her disengagement from authority and received canons. We are hardly entitled to estimate, or to try to estimate, her future by any deductions or principles or data derived from the history of contemporary States, none of which has known the psychical and physical crises of Japan's unprecedented experience. Since none of us have known what she has known, we are none of us able to state with precision what she may do or how she may do it. At the most we can only observe how much the attachment to canons of experience and authoritative precedents has counted for—how much it still counts for—in our conscious activity as nations, and, from this observation, reason or speculate how much the absence of this attachment may count for in the case of Japan.

For, of course, nothing is so evident of Japan's modern era as that it implies an abandonment of received canons and authoritative precedents—not a complete abandonment, but such a divorce from canon and authority as challenges or disturbs the very habit or instinct upon which canon and authority repose for their prestige. Who might so much doubt the efficacy of authority as he who finds happiness in the repudiation of it ?

Japan's modern era is unlike anything in the history of any other contemporary people. This alone guarantees some originality in her future, or at the

least it implies a fundamental dissimilarity between her attitude towards her future and that of other peoples towards theirs. The important characteristic of her 'experience' is its certain tendency to undermine authority and received canon. This is a further guarantee of Japanese originality—of the eccentricity, as we may judge it, of the Japanese present and future. Without ceasing to claim a certain worth for the civilisation of her isolation—in respect of its art, for example—Japan nevertheless repudiated its authority when the more massive achievement of the civilisation of Europe was brought to her notice. And it is worth while observing—or repeating—that probably never in history has authority been entrenched so powerfully or accepted so slavishly as in the Japan of pre-modern times. Government was a universal despotism, canon was nearly everything in art, convention was nearly the whole of the social ethic. The effect of the overthrow of an authority and a canon so despotic and explicit was certain to be extraordinary and far-reaching. The rebound from the release of the strain will evidently be at least nearly equal to the strain. In the day of its discredit authority will be scorned and repudiated in proportion as it is accepted and respected in the day of its infallibility. Japanese commoners in pre-modern times—up to 1870—went upon their knees and gazed upon the ground when they met a Daimyo's procession on the public highway. To-day their House of Representatives, with commoners for the larger proportion of its members, is among the most turbulent and truculent of such assemblies, and though officialdom is nowhere so powerful or so paternal as it still is in Japan, there is nowhere greater licence of comment upon the acts and the characters of the national leaders.



Assassination or attempted assassination of obnoxious or misunderstood statesmen has been a relatively frequent incident of Japanese domestic history since 1870, yet the common people—the mass of the nation, that is to say—were wont to be cut down by members of the Samurai or military class for infraction of a punctilio, and this not only without protest from themselves but with the approval of the government. Japanese leaders, whose names are daily dragged in the mire by the press of their own country, who in every grave crisis may expect at least a threat of death, are the victims of the chaos upon which authority fell when they or their immediate predecessors repudiated the canons of the old Japanese civilisation. The rebound is equal to the strain, and the one figure which is held in inviolable sanctity is that of the Emperor, who stands above the chaos perhaps because he stood outside the authority which the modern era overthrew.

One accounts for much of the eccentricity of modern Japan by naming it what it is—the dissolution of the power of a terribly rigid, extravagantly exact authority. This eccentricity is a first-fruit of Japan's unique experience of a unique release from the bonds of a despotic political and social canon. Esteeming Japan's 'revolution' or 'transformation' in this its proper aspect, or one of its proper aspects, it is plain that the 'experience' of her modern era must intrude into the consciousness of the nation as a psychological fact of profound significance, the while it connotes a historical factor which, as it is absent from the records of all other peoples, practically forbids all reasoning from historical analogy in the case of Japan. Japan, so to speak, is not only a new international state ; she is also, perhaps, a new idea or a new principle in history, of which it is yet too

early to say whether it be an entirely beneficent idea or a wholly useful principle.

If the modern era in Japan represent the dissolution of the sanctions of a formerly infallible canon, or what is, after all, the same thing, a formerly despotic canon, it is useful also to remember that the Japanese 'transformation' or 'revolution' has been, and still is, a movement absolutely differentiated from every kindred, or apparently kindred, crisis in European history, in that its inspiration has been, not the passion or the emotion of a people, but rather the intellectual eclecticism of their leaders—a great movement of reform from above, as I have described it. It might be said that the proper defenders of the authority of the canon which the modern era displaced have been renegade to their trust, for it was they—the ministers of the power of that canon—who first laid impious hands upon it and, after their clear perception of its inadequacy, revealed it to the eyes of the people, almost indifferent to their own enlightenment, in its true character of an anachronism. The revolution in Japan was really a sort of evolution; for the leaders of the nation, inspired by the larger patriotism, invited the people to share the powers which they themselves had for centuries monopolised. They were apostates to the political creed of which they were themselves the high priests. No defection could be more damaging to the authority of the creed; and in fact their apostasy has been fatal to true political authority in Japan. The people come near despising their political leaders the while they adore their Emperor, and bow down before an ideal image of their nationality. The revolution, though it be a reform from above, with the bare consent of the people, is nevertheless an upheaval. The Japanese

people have taken their leaders at their word ; they have accepted the valuation put upon the former political creed of the country by its own high priests. There is a covert mood of the Japanese people, not lacking occasional expression, which signifies that they begin to feel that they have been hoodwinked for some centuries. One does not very frequently unmask this mood, but the turbulence and corruption of the politicians and the popular indifference to or contempt for the authority of individual statesmen, freely expressed in the press of the country, are symptoms of it. The Japanese people are noticeably ungrateful to the reform leaders. The fact is, they secretly or openly bear them a grudge for having kept them in the dark for a millennium or so. In the discredit which they have brought upon their old creed the high priests have themselves been involved. Did not the Japanese people worship their Emperor, it is possible that they would hang the statesmen who surround him. One consequence is that the statesmen invoke the Emperor's name and cite his authority for their every act and their every policy, and one of the things that may be said of the current Japanese political system, with absolute assurance of its truth and propriety, is that though in fact the Emperor is less an originator and director of national policy than any European monarch, he is more necessary to the political well-being of the State than any other ruler in the world at large. Certainly the leaders—the statesmen who surround the Emperor—are also necessary, but in a different sense. They are necessary to the progress of the State ; the Emperor is necessary to its being. The people feel that they are themselves incapable of carrying on the modern era ; in their helplessness they accept the guidance, the aid,

and the service of leaders whom nevertheless they would scarcely respect, did they not in every act of devotion to the god of progress hold aloft the sacred ikon of the Emperor's prerogative.

How, then, has the modern movement in Japan—the Japanese 'transformation' or 'revolution'—affected the essential idiosyncrasy of the people? The movement must assuredly represent a profound psychological 'experience' or 'sensation'; the addition, that is to say, of a psychological fact, profoundly significant, to the historical consciousness of the people. In this intensive sense the movement might, presumptively, count for as much in the nation's record of consciousness as the French Revolution counts for in the European historical consciousness. The movement is also unique in its kind; it is nothing less than the abandonment or the overthrow of the precedential and canonical authority of a civilisation more than a thousand years old. It is unique also, from the European point of view, in being a movement intellectual rather than emotional, and therefore directed from above, by the intellect of the nation, instead of from below by the passion of the people. Yet its most obvious incidental effect is, in a certain sense or measure, to discredit the very intellect—that of the Japanese leaders—which conceives and controls it, for the nation cannot but perceive how tardy the leaders have been to admit the justice of a *régime* which their despotic exclusiveness postponed for a thousand years!

Almost every prominent effect that may be observed of the modern movement in Japan affirms its intellectual character. Its potentiality as a movement of passion or emotion is only presaged,—presaged in the turbulence of the country's new political class, and in

incidental and isolated ebullitions of popular sentiment against particular leaders or particular acts of leaders, such ebullitions merely interrupting a record of popular docility which is an expression or confession of the people's inability to manage the modern movement in their own behoof.

The dawn of the modern era beheld a people enslaved by a political despotism and bound by a social formalism. In theory at least, the political despotism has disappeared, while the social formalism survives, though in some degree reduced, by its loss of moral sanctions, to the status of a conventionalism. Social and family custom and usage are practically as they always were. Here the affections of the people are engaged. The old political or class divisions have disappeared; the former territorial nobles, pillars of the pre-modern feudal system, have become names or nothing. Here it is the mind of the nation that is concerned; and whereas, under the old order, the people were prevented by a general and local despotism from conceiving that they had a political status, they are now invited to fit themselves for the major share of the State's political responsibilities. The negative part of this intellectual lesson has been learned: the people criticise and sometimes assassinate the statesmen who are the successors of those Daimyo and Samurai before whom they were wont to grovel. They still fail in the positive precept of the lesson: they do not direct, they are incapable of directing, the politics of the State. The soil of their minds has been turned up and some seeds of a crop of new ideas are sown in it, but the harvest of positive results is still in the future.

Modern education has been organised, and its light slowly invades the gloomy yet often picturesque empire

of popular superstition ; but the latter has roots in the heart of the people, and its formidable power is still guaranteed by the self-interest of a great Buddhist and Shintoist hierarchy historically associated with the growth of Japanese superstition. It cannot be said that there is any radical change—certainly there is no ‘transformation’—in the attitude of the mass of the people towards either the small kernel of religious truth in the Buddhist and Shinto cults or the vast accretion of superstitious husk by which the kernel in both cases is surrounded. On the other hand the controlling intellect of the country, under the new order, from having once looked upon the mysteries with the very eyes of the people, now turns away alike from superstition and religious truth and evinces a certain vanity of its adoration of reason. Like the scientific agnosticism of Europe, it allows only a difference of degree between superstitious delusion and religious dogma.

The modern movement has been intellectual and from above. Such an anarchy of the pre-existing sanctions and supports of society, such an overturn of the conditions of society, as the great revolution witnessed in France, has never been threatened in Japan, even if it be true that a civilisation and not a political order has there been displaced. The social ethic and the conventional morality of the Japan of to-day are the ethic and the morality of the Japan of the past ten centuries. The position of woman, her status and function, are as they were. She is what she has always been in Japan, the negative agent in the great social undertaking of maintaining and perpetuating the family—the social unit. Filial piety remains to this day the main precept of the moral code of the country. Individuality, it is true, struggles to free itself from the

repressive conditions imposed by the prevailing conception of the paramount importance of the family—embodied alike in the status of women and of children; and in their statesmen—leaders—the makers of the reform era, and their surviving associates and successors—the nation has ever in its eyes a galaxy of illustrious examples of individual achievement as great as is recorded in the history of any contemporary State. These examples are part of the educative machinery of the modern era, whose chief purpose must of necessity be the evocation of individuality, even against the opposition of the canons of social practice.

Yet, in face especially of the immobility of the social ethic and practice—of the real foundation of the society fabric, that is to say—there may appear to be some extravagance in the representation of the modern movement in Japan as an ‘experience’ so profound as to imply the addition of a fact of enormous psychological significance to the historical consciousness of the people, and so peculiar—so unlike any ‘experience’ of contemporary peoples—as to imply a Japanese future without precedent or example in the past. Moreover, if Japan continue to adhere to those very customs and sanctions upon which the structure of her society has always been founded, can it be said that she has broken with her past; that, unlike any other people, the people of Japan have cast out tradition and canon and the sanctity of authority?

The pertinence of the question disappears if it be admitted that the ultimate sanction of all political authority is intellectual and not emotional. The modern movement in Japan is, and has been, essentially intellectual, and in this character it is probably in the long-run more effectually destructive of tradition

and authority than if it were, or had been, emotional. The objects which make appeal to the emotions of modern Japan are the very objects to which the heart of the Japanese people has always clung — ancestor-worship, filial reverence, loyalty. Yet the intellect—the intellectual method—of the nation may be said to have been transformed, and a subsidiary or almost incidental effect of this transformation has been an adjustment, though not a change of the objects of its affections. The subversion of the Shogunate system, with its sequel the restoration of the Emperor to actual power, was, in the first place, an achievement of Japanese historical criticism—of Japanese intellect. This criticism exhibited the Shogun as a usurper of the place and function of the Emperor. Under the Shogunate system—the feudal polity—the Japanese notion of loyalty was faithfulness unto death to the feudal lord. The abolition of feudalism abolished the feudal lord, and Japanese loyalty adjusted itself to the new conditions. For the feudal lord it substituted the Emperor ; for the feudal clan the nation. The movement was intellectual, though in fact it involved a great readjustment of emotional ‘objects.’

The originating force of the modern era being in the main intellectual, that which is the fact follows by inference — the heart of Japan is unchanged. The affections and the emotions of the nation remain attached to objects of which all that can be said is that they have been slightly readjusted by the intellectual revolution. From Chinese philosophy and formalism the intellect of Japan has turned to experimental science and reason, but the heart of Japan does reverence to Imperial and family ancestors as of old.

As an intellectual movement the modern era is



inevitably materialistic in its aims. Originating in a perception of the material helplessness of Japan against the power of Europe and European civilisation—expressed especially in terms of gun-metal—the modern movement necessarily concentrated its energies on the absorption or the acquisition of the material features of European progress. ‘Our progress is quite satisfactory on the material side,’ said Baron Iwasaki, a man of great commercial standing and influence, recently. ‘Nearly all the necessary elements of Western civilisation have been introduced in the spheres of politics, science, art, industry, and commerce.’ ‘But in point of fact,’ observed the same authority in the same writing, ‘simultaneously with the reconstruction of our material system, the old code of morality received a death-blow, and a new code suitable to the new material system is not yet established.’

The impetus of the modern movement being intellectual, its results, at least for a time—for a considerable time—were bound to be mainly material. And the acme of a material aim under modern conditions is inevitably the commercial and industrial interest, with its corollary or correlative—a national army and navy. Japan adopted Western civilisation mainly from an intellectual perception of the inadequacy of her material strength under the old civilisation to resist the power of the civilisation of Europe. Only commerce and industry could supply her with the means of increasing her material strength until it should be adequate to resist the material power of Europe. Hence commerce and industry—the acme of the materialistic aim—became the master motive of the modern era, and this it is to-day.

The modern movement in Japan has been an

intellectual movement. It was inaugurated by the intellect of the governing class, not by the passion of the people. But the sanctions of authority being in the main intellectual, the movement is in effect a profound political revolution subversive of all canons which had no appeal to make to the heart of the people, and if the objects of a nation's devotion ultimately require the approval of a nation's intellect it would appear that the revolution in Japan must ultimately affect the total consciousness of the people. Baron Iwasaki, in the writing already quoted, affirms that the negative process of a moral revolution has already taken place in Japan. 'The moral code of old Japan has altogether disappeared,' he says; adding, 'and we have not succeeded in replacing it by the moral code of Europe.' This is hardly true. Ancestor-worship, filial piety, the dogma of Imperial divinity are as potent in their social and moral incidence as ever. They have not disappeared, though it may be true that they require to be supplemented by a broader scheme of moral responsibilities.

Intellectual in character, the modern movement must be held to represent the addition to the national consciousness of a psychological fact or 'experience' of immense significance. For it deprives tradition and historical authority of at least half its power—the intellectual half. Moreover, as has been said, it is probable that an intellectual revolution—apart from the question whether it must, in any event, ultimately invade the sphere of morals—means more in the Japanese character than in the European, because the Japanese—perhaps from the absence of religious dogma in the evolution of their historical consciousness—exhibit an intellectual rather than an emotional bias in their attitude towards life and

affairs. Further, it is clearly important to recall that the dissolution of an extraordinarily potent and extraordinarily minute despotism must always tend to engender a protest against received authority and traditional canons, energetic, or even passionate, in proportion as the despotism was potent and minute. The rebound will be nearly equal to the strain.

For the time being the fundamental psychic idiosyncrasy of the people at large is not intimately touched; they accept the quasi-divinity of their Emperor, they abide by the code of filial piety, and do reverence to ancestors. Yet the dissolution of a formerly despotic political authority, and the discredit of its canons and its formalism, seem to imply that the nation will not be withheld from any experiment or reform or adventure in the future by that reverence for the political past and that fear of political innovation which are powerful influences in polities where there has been no such overthrow of a traditional authority as has occurred in Japan. As the modern movement originated with the leaders of the time, and not with the people, leaders are of immense importance. In thirty years, a people, formerly without political status, could hardly acquire the knowledge and capacity to direct their leaders. It follows that education is of immense importance in the policy of the Japanese leaders; and from its original impetus having been an intellectual perception of Japan's material incompetence, it follows that the modern movement has for its master aim the development of the resources whereby material competence can be assured.



PART II  
THE FUTURE AND ITS PROBLEMS



## XX

### JAPAN AND THE AGE

JAPAN has emerged upon the world's stage at a curiously critical epoch. For her—for her future—the epoch is either exceedingly fortunate or exceedingly unfortunate. A very malignant or a very beneficent fate has contrived the 'time' of her appearance. For the world, too, her entrance at this time is important ; in the crisis of our present climacteric Japan may be a blessing or a curse to us. She cannot well be a mere negligible quantity.

For the good guidance, if not for the bare safety, of her own future, the age requires from Japan chiefly a masterly eclecticism, the command of a soul of discrimination which, for its great task, might seem to need the inspiration of heaven. For, of course, Japan has come among us at a great era of unsettlement. Even our first principles of morals, almost as truly as of politics, are tossing in the crucible of criticism. Japan comes to our Western civilisation for lessons at a time when our Western civilisation feels its own need of going to school. Japan consults the authority of a priest whose dogma is tinkering ; we are prophets who preserve the prophetic aspect only with great effort. Some few things we have settled finally, though the verdict is oftener that of experience than that of logic ;

not our wisdom, in truth, but the wisdom of history. A host of things are mere enigmas ; some of our chiefest certainties of the past are our cruellest doubts of to-day ; our world has expanded, but it has grown more nebulous ; we see a deeper but also a dimmer horizon ; the cosmos is bigger and greater than we thought, but it is also more mysterious, more tantalising, and therefore—Heaven knows—more terrible. How often might we regret, how dearly lament, the day when the cloister was possible to a logician, when a Descartes still found it possible to admit a faith and subscribe a dogma ! It is different now.

For Japan, too, it is different. She was nearly becoming Roman Catholic in our Elizabethan age. Had the Spanish priests been as wise as they doubtless were good they might soon have announced to the Pope the addition of a new kingdom to his holy empire. The opportunity was lost for ever. This is another age than the Elizabethan, and Japan knows as much, even better than we do.

We are unsettled ; we are uneasy ; we are anxious ; we look in the heavens for a sign. The world has made the cycle of faith, and, perforce, we sigh again by reason of 'the unknown God.' We are brothers to the men of Athens ; we have our gods of silver and of brass, but there is also our painful altar to the Unknown. And as yet no Paul has appeared. The soul of man has completed its orbit, and again, as it seems, the central sun is eclipsed.

For Japan there is the same eclipse, and yet—this being the difference between us—it is scarcely to her the eclipse of a central, controlling sun. She beholds our modern amazements and perplexities—the amazements and perplexities of our European age—without



sharing our attendant anxieties, perhaps without being capable of them. She finds us watching the war of faith and science with the palpitating heart of those whose kingdom of rest and peace is at stake. Japan has no anxiety; she has never known our faith, our fabric of dogma, the ark of our faith, nor the deep satisfactions it has provided against certain profound needs of ours. She surveys the certain conquests of science and gladly enlists herself a subject of the scientific certainties. Our faith, our dogma, has never been to her a bulwark against the assault of leagued and embattled fiends; therefore she is calm, content, devoted to the cultivation of the fair fields of the empire of science.

To the world Japan—her past and her present, but especially her future—is thus a momentous interest, and that in at least two general aspects. As much as this is implied in the universal admission that she is unprecedented. Her rise to a place among the leading States challenges, or seems to challenge, every precedent—political, social, religious—in the moral fabric of Western civilisation. For has she not almost disproved the necessity of all our precedents? That which we had deemed essential and fundamental, in the light of the Japanese achievement, shrivels to the merely incidental. There is no longer, as it seems, any real ‘necessity’ of European history. A conception of the evolution of man as inevitably predestined to take the very course, and no other, which we have seen it take in history—even this conception, dear alike to our most modern philosophical theory and to our most ancient theological prejudice, suffers a certain disturbance. Why should a millennium have been necessary when this Oriental people promises the achievement of

our millennium in a century or less? Are two hundred and fifty years the necessary period of the adolescence of an idea if Japan mature the same idea to its adult functions in half a century or less?

An apprehension, based on the apparent proofs afforded by Japan, of the needlessness of great epochs of our past, is perhaps the secret spring of the European suspicion and uneasiness in presence of Japan. There is in our minds a remembrance of our bloody experience, of our eras of sweat and agony, of our mortal pains in the bringing forth of many an infant truth. We had conceived these trials by fire to be of the inevitable and inexorable discipline and penance with which the way to our moderate political and social heaven must necessarily be strewn. We had, in fact, reposed on their necessity, believing that, under heaven, the world—the world of ideas and of fact—was ours because we had fought and suffered and died in the conquest of it. So we had beheld, with a charitable and often an amused indulgence, the aspiration, and, as we were wont to call it, the pretension of Japan, of this deliciously picturesque Oriental people, whose exclusive and peculiar triumphs of art alone we admitted, with a reservation that even these we knew and could cherish better than she herself might.

To-day there is another mood. We are not appalled; we are not afraid; we are not even uneasy. We are discontented. It is a later stage of disdain. We—Europe—we are 'sour.' In presence of Japan we are conscious or unconscious of our chagrin. We are not 'pained,' but we are 'sore.' We are not injured, but we are very nearly insulted. There is nothing at which we can take offence; yet we are offended. We feel—we know—that our

reputation has been diminished by the ease of the young champion's success in our feats. Japan has played Orlando to our Charles, and if we do not feel that it is yet necessary to fear Orlando, we know that Charles can no longer be held in the same esteem. He must suffer—he has suffered—even in his own respect, and we are disposed to quarrel, not so much, indeed, with Orlando as with ourselves. We perceive, alas, that even the solid fabric, raised with infinite labour and at inconceivable expense, of our Western power, culture, science, political theory and practice, may include a chamber of illusions. And there is an uneasy suspicion in our minds that this chamber of illusions may be in the very basement of our gorgeous salons of Reason and Faith. Japan suggests to us that the foundations of our worships and our facts should be examined lest, too late, they be discovered to be merely phantasies.

Japan, in fact, while she claims a place which now, almost as perforce, we must accord her among the great material powers and dignities of the earth, challenges a stranger precedence. It is necessary to admit that she comes among us armed with the peculiar terrors of a great iconoclast of ideas. She is a momentous interest to us—to the World, especially the European World—in at least two general aspects. She is a world-power, whose weight must in future be reckoned in the international balance ; in a sort she is also now a power in the skies, a planetary body—scarcely a comet, let us hope—disturbing the orbits of our old ideas, theories, hopes, aspirations, prayers. Japan is to be enumerated among the variety of causes which, in these days, more and more confuse our systems of soul and mind. She is—and possibly may more and more be—

an important agent in the terrible revolution which to-day overtakes the whole empire of our theological, philosophical, political concepts.

Europe might be excused a double apprehension—a fear, first, of damage to her prestige ; second, of loss of her self-respect. The first is, of course, material ; the second moral. The latter is without doubt the more important. We can endure to part with a portion of the earth ; but if Japan is to shatter our hope of heaven we must needs be appalled !

In the material aspect, Japan connotes the appearance in the world of a new centre of political interest. For Europe an extension is necessary of the process of thought by which in recent years she has met the necessity of admitting the United States into the world-system. The United States invited our perceptive political consciousness to take a journey half round the world. Japan asks us to complete the circle. Our political consciousness must now visit the Antipodes for every reckoning and summation of energies and potencies. Involuntarily we are to become world-thinkers ; world-statesmen. We are compelled to be greater than we had intended to be. Japan takes us out of ourselves ; she enables us to perceive a very sublime thing, the oneness of the great human interest, the identity and unity of the species. Our European minds find it a little difficult to get accustomed to this larger atmosphere ; hence some of the grudge we bear towards Japan. Besides striking at our old ideas, she introduces us to the discomfort of accommodating new ones. Japan educates in us a new, or at least a wider and more generous sense ; she bids us learn, and like all who have to learn, we do not quite love the lesson or the teacher.

The appearance of this new political orb flutters our serenity. We—Europe—must be aware that an obstacle has arisen to our political audacity. Europe has been accustomed to think very imperially of itself. A formidable obstacle has arisen to our political audacity in the world, with a reflected or sympathetic effect upon our moral tyranny of the world. Europe, or our European civilisation, has cultivated a habit of dominion which had at length become an instinct of arrogance over the rest of the world and its civilisations. In this we have had the Roman mind; we have borne the Roman mien, the mind and the mien of the Augustan age. These are no longer possible. The world is no longer at our feet. Japan challenges our high demeanour not alone in her own behalf. If we are wise we shall begin now to admit that the world—especially the Asiatic world—is not so despicable as we had supposed. Without intending it Japan has struck a blow for the world—especially the Asiatic world—against Europe, and true though it be, that in her mind there is no vindictiveness towards Europe, her indirect example may be as potent as her direct incitement. We—Europe—if we are wise, shall at least assume so much. We shall perceive that it is necessary to walk with a warier step and to think more charitable thoughts. It is well if, without compulsion, we consent to a greater humility in the sight of heaven than has been our habit. There is no dishonour, save to the pusillanimous, in the lessons of liberality taught by experience or history. There is nothing mean in accepting the necessity of being greater than our past. We do not become less manly by becoming more God-like.

Yet the lessons which Japan, as by necessity and

without intention, reads us in political behaviour are of secondary interest beside the strange interrogations she puts to our past. We are unsettled, if not upset, by the Japanese achievement. She seems to introduce us to a psychic world from which the realities—the realities we had conceived—have disappeared. As to religion, we perceive a ‘pagan’ people refusing Christianity, yet accomplishing an unparalleled feat apparently with unparalleled ease. We—Europe—we have said, ‘Our religion, our Christianity, is the one precious thing. It is precious for itself and it is precious because we have prospered in it, if not because of it.’ But now there is Japan! Have we then imagined a vain thing about religion, about Christianity, about divine government, about the laws of destiny, about the world, about heaven, about hell? There is, too, the enigma of our suffering. We have said, we have thought, ‘The greatness or the value of that which we have achieved or shall achieve is to be measured by the blood and the tears wherewith we have achieved it; we shall gain no great thing, no valuable thing, without blood or tears.’ Is there anything of which we have been more profoundly convinced than this? Is it not, in fact, the very basis of all our philosophy of life? On this theory we have won Liberty, made Law, conceived Justice, created Commerce, written Drama, believed and loved Poetry. We have accepted tyranny as the necessary prelude to liberty; licence has been permitted because law was in prospect; justice has been postponed because, as we have believed, history or life is itself just; in commerce we exchange exact values, because we have never known two and two to make more than four; our drama must be just, else it is not drama; our poetry is nothing more than a conception of ideal rela-

tions, that is, of ideal justice. But there is Japan! What blood has she shed, what tears wept in the gaining of the great and valuable things that have cost us our blood and our tears—liberty, law, justice, commerce, drama, poetry? Has she paid the price of these boons? If not, by what law of necessity was it that we paid the price? Were our tyrants then so necessary to our liberty, our harrows of oppression as essentially preliminary to our beds of justice, as we had thought? Is it true that every vision of heaven must cost the soul an agony; that every sublime picture shall be painted with a heart's blood; that from the tree of suffering alone and eternally must we expect to pluck the fruit of love?

Besides a new centre of political interest, Japan apparently offers us a new theory, a new philosophy of history—a theory, a philosophy, whose peculiar principle, in so far as it is yet open to analysis, seems to be that it ignores or has ignored necessity—European ‘necessity,’ the necessity inherent in the European point of view, or the European concept of ‘historical development,’ and in the Christian concept of religion, the divine thing.

## XXI

### THE JAPANESE TENDENCY

Its recent and remoter history being subjected to adequate analysis, Japan, the nation, state, and social organism, yields sufficiently clear deductions as to the character and purport of this new and formidable factor in the ensemble of civilisation.

In the historical perspective we see the Japanese the docile children of a despotism, that of the Shogunate, so searching and comprehensive as almost to take the place and exercise the functions of Providence in their lives. This despotism, political, moral, and social, they accepted almost as they accepted the skies or the sunset, or the loveliness of their country. Through ages of use this despotism had succeeded in commending itself to the nation as part of the order of nature. Under it the nation was not so much a political entity as a natural fact ; it was not so much an energy as a thing ; it was a mass rather than a force. And this despotism was challenged, not by the passion of the people,—by which the despotisms of Europe have commonly been challenged,—but by the intellect of a class, the ruling class. Its sanctions having disappeared under the scrutiny of historical criticism, its actual power was first undermined, afterwards destroyed. It was succeeded by, as it were,



a despotic diarchy—by an Emperor of divine descent, in theory, and ultimately, in fact, despotic; yet in truth sharing his power with an invisible potentate in the shape of a great idea—the idea of a universal political reform, conceived by the intellect of the country, adopted almost as a religion, and served almost as a god. It is indeed doubtful which of the two rulers of Modern Japan, the old Emperor or the new era, has been the true autocrat of the country since the despotism of the Shogunate disappeared.

It is to be inferred that the modern era in Japan, or in other words, Modern Japan, has been the product of two great historical forces, the one positive, the other negative. The positive force was the protest of the natural genius of Japan against the age-long despotism whose political paternalism, and social and moral formalism, had enchained or repressed it. That despotism but succeeded in storing up an energy sufficient at once as a cause and an explanation of the great semi-retributive ebullition of which Modern Japan is the result. The negative force was the absence from the mind—the historical mind—of Japan of absolute religious dogma. It was only in the absence of this enormously influential agent in the process of history—enormously influential in the process of European history—that the establishment of the despotism of the Shogunate became possible. For this despotism became universal and absolute only because the people had no universal and absolute court of appeal imaged in their minds in the form of universal and absolute religious dogma. Equally, or almost equally, Modern Japan, such as it is, has been assisted by the absence of this idea of a universal and absolute, imaged in religious dogma. The intellect of the country, by which the old despotism was overthrown

and the new era inaugurated, has had no opposition from dogma, or from its champions, in its effort of universal reform.

The first great conversion, or subversion, achieved, we behold the ruling intellect of Japan, using its two gods or symbols, a quasi-divine Emperor, and the great idea of a universal political reform designed to conduct Japan to the place and dignity of a great and honoured state,—we see the ruling intellect, under the authority of these symbols, transforming a feudal polity into a modern state. We behold this transformation as an act, as a triumph, of intellect, not of passion ; a revolution from above, not from below ; an education forced on the people by their masters rather than a boon wrung from their masters by the people ; a reform of ruling method by the ruling class rather than an acclamation or adoption by the people of great and adored principles of progress.<sup>1</sup>

Politically considered, the movement, as it is intellectual, is and has been directed mainly towards reforms of method or procedure, while, as designed to conduct Japan out of the night of feudalism into the day of a status and dignity, modern and international, it was of necessity materialistic in aim.

Originating in the intellect of the country—the intellect of the ruling class—the leading characteristic of this revolution is a total change of intellectual method among the ruling class. This change of intellectual method is a repudiation of the narrow principles—the geometric principles, as I have elsewhere called them—of the Chinese or Confucian political and moral phil-

<sup>1</sup> In Europe—or European progress—we have been accustomed first to make the acquaintance of great ideas—liberty, equality, social responsibility, and so on—and afterwards to translate them into statutory facts. In Japan the facts have been introduced while the people are but beginning to know the names of the ideas.

osophy, and the sequent adoption of the best principles deduced from European experience. This is the great release of the Japanese mind from the unnatural bondage of a moral and political system which, for centuries, repressed the inherent originality, enfeebled the native strength, and curbed the natural ambition of the Japanese mind. This release is the primary explanation of Modern Japan, when it is conceded that the occurrence of a mind of the European type at the eastern extremity of Asia—this being, in the writer's view, the true and ultimate marvel of Modern Japan—is itself inexplicable.

What are the leading phenomena and results, and what is the main tendency, of this unique revolution, this great effort of reform, unprecedented as to inspiration and method? It placed and places materialistic aims in the forefront of its endeavour. We thus see it in pursuit of its master purpose concentrate its major effort and a disproportionate share of its material resources, not on the propagation of a new religion, or upon the overthrow of an old one; not on the reconstruction of the fabric of society, or on the subversion of its traditional usages and habitudes; not even—or at any rate, not at first—on the spread of new enlightenment among the people and the dissipation of ancient prejudices and the dethroning of old gods, but on the increase and the upbuilding of the nation's material competence, in order that the structure of the new international state should first of all repose upon a secure foundation. Here incidentally we observe the explanation—one great explanation—of Japan's efficiency in war. This efficiency has, as it were, been purchased at the cost of chaos as in her moral ideas, disorder in her political system, and negation in the

sphere of religion—that sphere wherein the mind of Christian Europe has always found its most positive satisfactions.

As the movement was intellectual in origin, and materialistic in aim, it inevitably failed to supply the place of the moral canons whose authority its intellectual method—so fruitful of results in other directions—has destroyed, or must ultimately destroy.

It as yet lacks the instinct—or at any rate the desire—to replace its former canons with the moral system—that is to say, with the religion—of Europe, whence came its new intellectual method. For the first impulse of the new movement was not religious or moral but mainly intellectual. It is true that we find—it is natural that we should find—the government of the State, the State itself, in obedience to its instinctive perception of the inadequacy of a purely intellectual reform, offering, as it were to take the place and supply the function of a real moral authority by charging itself with a responsibility which other civilised States are accustomed to leave almost wholly to religion—the responsibility of inculcating morals as part of the national educational scheme. Yet we find the best opinion of the State almost unanimous in averring that while the sanctions of the former moral *régime* have been destroyed by the intellectual revolution of the era, the creation of a new morality—a new moral authority—is a necessity of the future.

As the modern era was conceived and inaugurated by the ruling class, who in effect were and are the government of the State, we find a government, many of whose methods might be an example to the governments of the world, and a people whose political notions are those of the European peoples of a century or two

centuries back. We find national leaders who profess ultra-modern views of the cosmos and its meaning and destiny, presiding over a people whose superstitions belong to an era of European history even farther removed from the present than is the era of their political notions. We find a State in which the leaders are all-important because theirs was the whole idea of the modern State and because theirs is the wisdom and experience that alone might preside with success over its future.

Modern Japan is thus, as a political State, markedly differentiated from other members of the comity of civilisation. This State is the product of the genius and the effort of a group of the nation's leading men who, as they succeeded in their effort of reconstruction, became the ruling and official class—or the chiefs of the ruling and official class—in the new, modern State. Not only so: the reform they contemplated and inaugurated, the reform which has already been carried to a pitch of formidable and impressive success, embodied ideas so much in advance of the ideas of the former State that the group espousing them remains, and must for long remain, by the peculiarity of their function and the distinction of their ideas, almost isolated from the rest of the nation. This means that we have in Japan a polity whose ruling class, as compared with the class of power in Western polities, is far more proficient and far more enlightened than the general body of the nation, and, by the same token, far more necessary to the State and much more responsible than the class of power in European polities. The political intelligence of the people is a factor so insignificant in the balance of State forces in Japan that it need hardly be enumerated among them. The people's patriotism, blind and self-devoting

because it is almost religious, counts for all that the combined intelligence and patriotism of Western peoples represent in the balance of forces in Western States. A just representation of the people in the counterpoise of the State is secured, so to speak, by the superabundance of their patriotism providing for the deficiency of their intelligence. Were the people indifferent or undecided in point of patriotism Japan would be lost, for the people could not offer intelligence as a sufficient substitute for patriotism as some peoples are able to do without danger, and possibly with profit, to the State.<sup>1</sup>

Again, there is an acute contrast with European polities in the fact that, whereas in these latter—all of them products of long and difficult historical processes—institutions are the salient guarantors of the State's stability, and the truest expression of its identity, whether because they are ancient, or because they have been bought with a price of effort or of blood, in Japan we have a State whose political institutions, because they are new, or because they have been acquired by the people without a price and without a struggle, are dwarfed and overshadowed by its political leaders. The latter are older than the institutions; they are more real, as political facts, than institutions whose value cannot be appreciated,

<sup>1</sup> Sir Harry Parkes, British Minister to Japan in the early years of the modern history of the country, ventured a prophecy that Japan would come to grief from the same causes which have prevented the South American States from achieving, even in a single instance, a commanding position in the world—intestine faction, aggravated by ignorance of true political principles. Though this prophecy has been completely falsified, it cannot be said that Sir Harry Parkes spoke without some justification of fact. There was in his time, and there is to-day in Japan, abundant domestic faction and dense popular ignorance of political principles. Sir Harry, however, overlooked the enormous effect of the nation's passion of patriotism which, when the general good is in question, causes faction to subside, and resigns popular ignorance of principles wholly into the hands of leaders endowed, not indeed with knowledge of principles so much as with supreme skill in method and great shrewdness of judgment.

because they have literally cost nothing. Instead of a constitutional, or, as it might be termed, an institutional morality—a morality of profound respect for the visible images and symbols of the State—there is, in Japan, veneration, almost religious, of the head of the State, first, as a quasi-divine person, but also, and perhaps more truly, as the supreme representative or embodiment of race and State as facts. Instead of a people politically instructed, there is a nation whose political emotions are extraordinarily vivid. Japan is an Empire broadly based on the people's patriotism; but not firmly founded on the people's intelligence. The people are politically ignorant, but they are emotionally homogeneous. They lack political skill and discernment, but their ignorance of political truths may be said to assist rather than obstruct their devotion to the State. They could not—they cannot—expound political creeds, but they are almost fanatics in their devotion to their church, the State, and to its leading symbol, their Emperor. They do not know principles and doctrines, nor have they any profound respect for the political institutions that represent principles and doctrines; but they obey without faltering the injunction of the State—self-immolation, if need be, on its altars. Whereas in Europe—in Western Europe—we require to have reasons stated, and the logic if not the justice of policies displayed, in Japan there is a people which accepts the demand or the intimation of the State as a sufficient reason, the *status quo* as the logic, and the issue as the justice of policies. This people's heart is not dominated or directed by their political mind; for in truth they have no political mind. Or let it be put that their political mind, such as it is, is in the keeping of their leaders, while their heart is their Emperor's; their

Emperor being, in the most important sense, the State.

The Emperor's unique place in the State—the fact that he represents the only truly religious idea in the minds of the people—leads to a conclusion, suggested indeed by many open and tangible evidences, that it is in the sphere of religious ideas that Japan exhibits most clearly her wide divergence from the past records and the contemporary example of Europe. Japan's religious idea in a manner abolishes, or proposes to abolish, the realm and jurisdiction of the supernatural. From the European point of view this is, of course, the same thing as to say that Japan has no religious idea. For ages past—in all recorded European time—the consciousness of European peoples, and therefore their allegiance, has been divided between two authorities, the religious and the political. In Japan, for the first time in civilised history, the two are, as it were, merged, or one is absorbed in the other. How much of the thought and of the energy, how great a measure of the material resources of European States, have been absorbed in endeavours to compose the differences or to harmonise the jurisdictions of the two authorities—religious and political, spiritual and temporal—throughout all the past history of Europe, and European civilisation, is apparent on the face of that history and civilisation. To-day we see in the problem of these differences, the problem of harmonising these jurisdictions, one of the leading pre-occupations of the statesmen of Europe. In modern Japan the jurisdiction of religion, as understood in Europe, is virtually abolished. For the Japanese Government—that is, the Japanese State—not only proceeds on the assumption that there is no separate jurisdiction of religion, but virtually represents itself as



the only religion, and in that representation is for the present accepted and endorsed by its constituents, the nation. The Emperor, and the ideas associated with him or suggested by his quasi-divine function and character, constitute the only 'body of truth' that can be viewed in the shape, or as fulfilling the function, of a religion of dogma in the minds of the Japanese people. The sacrosanctity of the Emperor is the only Japanese idea resembling European religious dogma, and the worship of ancestors by the people—the Emperor's and their own—is the only Japanese practice which justifies a reference to true religious ritual in the lives of the people.

The function of the Japanese Government is peculiarly differentiated from that of European Governments in that it is virtually universal *vis-à-vis* the consciousness of the nation. The ruling class, with whom originated the modern movement, repudiates the office of religion as an authority separate and distinct from the State. It does not, in fact, admit even the theoretical existence of the religious authority as a fact except in so far as it is identified with the fact of State, or with the fact of a quasi-divine Emperor, as the head of the State. The State thus becomes responsible—it is obliged to become responsible—for the inculcation of morals and all those ideas and habits associated, in Europe, with the office and the function of religion. We have in Japan a theory of Government, as of State, which affirms that Government, or State, is the highest authority extraneous to the authority of individual consciousness itself. We have the State accepting—or usurping—the very attributes of God. It affirms itself to be both the universal and the particular, the body and the soul, the material and the ideal, the temporal and the spiritual.

In a sense it reduces the total consciousness of man, of the individual, into a political fact. It affirms that the polity is everything except the individual, who, however, is but a polity within a polity, a part of the whole.

It is thus clear from the origin and from the process of the modern era in Japan, even if it were not the open declaration of its leaders and managers, that its unique feature, the point in which it most gives pause to Europe and to European thought and European political method, is the effort it proposes to make to alter the character of civilisation by changing its base. Ultimately theological, ultimately religious, in character and motive as is the civilisation of Europe—mainly through its intimate association with dogmatic Christianity—Japan, modern Japan, proposes to reconstruct civilisation on a purely intellectual basis—to permeate it with a purely intellectual animus—to inspire it with a purely intellectual ideal. It seeks to concentrate, and in some measure it has already succeeded in concentrating, the strength of those emotions which European civilisation has hitherto reserved for the service and the support of religion—which, in fact, it has always identified with religion—into an ordered adoration of the images of State, and thereby to make of the State the dominating fact in human consciousness the while intellect is accepted as sole arbiter of the methods, and sole originator of the means of uplifting, improving, and beautifying the State, and through the State the individual, by the cultivation and the exploitation of ideas.

We see the State imaged as the supreme fact in human consciousness by the investment of its head virtually with the attributes of divinity. We see the nation, in the self-abandonment of its patriotism,

accepting the State as the supreme fact, demanding in any crisis of its existence the sacrifice of their lives. We see the State accepting the functions of the supreme fact in undertaking duties *vis-à-vis* the citizen which are in Europe assigned exclusively to religion, the while it also repudiates any separate jurisdiction of religion. The Japanese attempt—the attempt of the Japanese State, in its present mood and intention—is an attempt to stamp civilisation with a purely scientific, purely intellectual character, if not to prove that its cause is exclusively in the operation of intellect and its ultimate destiny the apotheosis of science.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This conclusion, arrived at inductively from the evidence of Japanese facts and phenomena, is clearly stated from the more or less subjective point of view of a Japanese by Baron Suyematsu in an article, 'Moral Teaching in Japan,' in the *Nineteenth Century* (Feb. 1905). The matter being of some importance—involving indeed, as I conceive, the main point of difference between the subjective attitude of Christian Europe and that of modern Japan—I quote what Baron Suyematsu says of the State's fulfilment, or attempted fulfilment, of the functions of religion: 'To outsiders . . . it may appear somewhat difficult to comprehend how boys and girls could be thoroughly imbued with moral sentiments without connecting these in some way with religion; but when they are taught with thoroughness, basing their systematic exposition on the duties of human beings towards one another and to the State, and on the noble traditions of their own community and the characteristic virtue of their forefathers, in which they ought to rejoice, and when appeals are made to the honour and pride which one should feel and value, and, above all, to the conscience of individuals, one's thoughts appear to become imbued with the lessons conveyed, and moral notions thus taught seem to become *per se* a kind of undefined but none the less potent and serviceable religion.' Baron Suyematsu then describes the attributes of the State—Emperor, country, nationality—accepted as the objective religious concept of the Japanese: 'In Japan, broadly speaking, the country, the land, the people, the nation, and the State are co-extensive; they may, therefore, from an ethical point of view, be said to be with us Japanese one and the same thing. Then, on the other hand, the reigning Emperor, the imperial dynasty, and the State are, sophistic as it may appear, almost synonymous from the moral point of view, and constitute, in their mutual relationship to one another, the most lofty object of all that the Japanese people can ever have before them in the secular world, which therefore may be regarded as though thereby transformed and spiritualised.'

A passing reference may be permitted also to an article by Professor Tomizu of Tokyo, in the *Revue Diplomatique*, in which the position is assumed that the appearance of Japan represents the close of the theological age—the age in which a Providence, other than the merely human, has been at work in history—and the

opening of the scientific age, in which, presumably, the intellect and the science of man are to be sole arbiters in the affairs of men. 'The nineteenth century,' says Professor Tomizu, 'was the end of the Middle Ages and the end of the theological age.' These affirmations, apart from many evidences of collateral tendency, justify the conclusion, suggested in the text, that Japan—modern, educated Japan—at present virtually represents an attempt to abolish the separate sphere or jurisdiction of religion on earth. I have stated reasons in my concluding chapters for believing that Japan is destined to fail in this attempt.

## XXII

### MODERN PHILOSOPHICAL POSITION

THE modern era in Japan, as a revolution in political method, implies a convulsion of thought. Europe has been too much occupied with the picturesque and dramatic details of the modern movement in Japan to recall what, after all, ought to be a very obvious inference. A political revolution in civilised polities always implies an upheaval of thought. The Japanese political revolution has hardly been appreciated in this aspect in Europe. The enlightenment of continental Europe even now, after Japanese success against one of the greatest military Powers of Europe, discusses the modern movement in Japan as if it were but an instance of phenomenally rapid emergence from barbarism into civilisation. In Great Britain and America the movement is differently and more accurately construed. It is there recognised in its truer historical character of a revolution, the displacement of one civilised system, one civilising method, by another.<sup>1</sup> Japan, of course, was not a barbarism before her modern era. She was a

<sup>1</sup> Modern Japan is, indeed, both a revolution and an evolution. It is an evolution in the sense that the germs of the modern movement lay *perdu*, as it were, in Japan itself, waiting only their season and occasion. Yet the movement is also a revolution in the sense that an epoch or epochs of European evolution were disposed of by Japan—in quite a revolutionary manner, so to say—in one or two decades. Revolution, after all, is often only phenomenally rapid evolution.

civilisation, in many respects a highly specialised and delicately organised civilisation. Her art, for instance, entirely pre-modern in origin and development, has received the homage of the world. In other words, Japan had already, before her modern era, explored a thousand avenues of civilised thought and specialised method. Centuries of cultivated genius had laboured in the erection of her fabric of civilisation. The modern era threw the greater part of this fabric to the ground. Is it to be inferred—as continental Europe even yet infers—that this overthrow was the act of a nation of automata? Is it not more proper that we be guided by the general principle that a political revolution in a civilised State implies also a convulsion of thought?

In truth, the Japanese leaders realise clearly enough the importance and the significance of ideas. They have known all along that civilisation is not a mechanism, and that a structure of civilised institutions can only be firmly based on an invisible rock of civilised ideas. The civilisation of their own pre-modern era had no other foundation than this; the sanctions of its visible material fabric were principles, morals, and ideas evolved and adapted in the history and growth of the Japanese consciousness and interwoven with the texture of Japanese being. Similarly, they realise that a new civilisation, if its strength and its permanence are to be assured, must repose upon the sanctions of new ideas, principles, and morals planted in the psychic consciousness of the people. In the educated mind of Japan this psychic revolution is accomplished. It has still to be achieved in the minds of the mass of the people. This is one mode of expressing or describing the abyss there is between leaders and people in Japan. The chasm, as has been elsewhere said, is happily bridged—or should

one say masked?—by the docile patriotism of the people which disposes them to accept the hardest lessons and the hardest adventures proposed by their leaders.

The inference of a convulsion of thought being of necessity incident to a political revolution in a civilised State has an important bearing upon the present and the future of Japanese thought. In the light of this inference one observes without astonishment that the educated mind of Japan already explores the farthest chambers of modern metaphysical speculation and weighs with eagerness, and often with justice, the probabilities of the theses of the newest philosophical systems. And we ought to be no more surprised to find that the educated mind of Japan as a rule takes a speculative or philosophical position, over against phenomena, to which few even among the daring and unconventional theorists of Europe have advanced.

The metaphysical and philosophical daring of modern, or educated, Japan is excused or explained also by the peculiar instincts or pre-conceptions with which it approaches the study of the general problem of phenomena. The foreign observer is almost amused to find how lightly and easily the Japanese transfer their allegiance from the European philosopher of yesterday to another whose system arrived by to-day's mail. Sworn disciples of Spencer they might be, but when Nietzsche arrived not long since the immediate vogue of his view of truth seemed to pronounce the doom of Spencer, whose philosophy numbers of the educated class of the Japan of to-day drank in with their mother's milk. The Japanese approach philosophy, or theories of phenomena, as they approach religion—that is to say, without a sense of the need of dogma or saving truth. One learned

foreign critic says of the Japanese mind that one of its most marked characteristics is its lack of interest in metaphysical, psychological, and ethical controversy of all kinds, but this seems an injustice or a misinterpretation, for scarcely a philosophy of ancient or modern times lacks Japanese disciples, who, though they may be mere isolated dilettanti, have at least been interested to the point of inquiry and examination. It is more true to say that they do not approach philosophical or metaphysical speculation out of a compelling feeling for the need of truth. The same uncanny gulf that separates the Eastern, or at least the Japanese, view of religion from the Western, opens up also under a scrutiny of our respective attitudes towards philosophy. We of the West yearn for light, religious or philosophical, as the thirsty for drink; the Japanese regard truth, philosophical or religious, as a relish or seasoning to life, that substantial meal of things seen and tangible. They are philosophical dilettanti even as they are religious dilettanti, because they are born without the 'craving' for the 'sign from heaven.'<sup>1</sup>

They are, nevertheless, interested, if only because they are curious and because they are desirous of fathoming the very deeps of civilisation. The responsible leaders are more than interested; they know, if they do not truly feel, that civilisation is not a mechanism; that it has its moral sanctions and its general if scarcely immutable principles. Nevertheless their serious attitude is largely political; they inquire of philosophy not what she has of saving

<sup>1</sup> 'With the majority of the learned class of Japanese society,' a Japanese writer says, discussing the mental characteristics of his countrymen, 'learning is no more than a pastime. It is pursued with no practical end in view and is valued more as a polite accomplishment than as an engine of enlightenment and a means of ameliorating the condition of suffering humanity.'



truth but what she has of efficacious, beneficial aids to civilisation.

It follows that the Japanese philosophical or metaphysical bent is, from the orthodox Western standpoint, essentially materialist. The convulsion of thought which of necessity accompanied the political revolution in Japan, though profound, has not been comprehensive or general. As has already been shown, it has not greatly stirred the emotional being of the country. The people's affections remain engaged to objects and ideas—reverence of ancestors, loyalty, filial duty—which have always been theirs, and always peculiarly Japanese. Apart from these objects and ideas the Japanese mind estimates both religious and philosophical concepts on a basis of their intellectual, educative, or civilising values. It can hardly be said that it conceives philosophy as the intellect of the West conceives it any more than it can be said that it conceives religion as Christianity embodies it. The Japanese philosophical position is a mere attitude when and where ours is a profound inquiry and a satisfying theory.

Philosophy, like religion, sits lightly upon the Japanese mind, because the Japanese mind has no instinct for intellectual dogma—or law—any more than the Japanese soul instinctively hopes or prays for religious dogma.

Though the basis of the Japanese philosophical attitude is thus clearly and almost of necessity materialistic, it is not to be presumed that it is therefore always dilettantist. If they fail to appreciate philosophical values in or for themselves, they have a sufficient esteem of political values, and they attain a certain seriousness in their method with, and in their attitude towards, ethics and metaphysics from apprehending that ethics

and metaphysics have a certain serious political value. We need never expect a Japanese philosophical system, because the Japanese mind does not look for a system. But we may hope for contributions to philosophical method or for new illustrations of the application, or the incidence, of philosophical concepts, since the pronounced materialistic bias of the Japanese mind may quite possibly enable it to throw a sidelight on problems which the more intensively idealist attitude and method of the West may be incapable of originating.

The instinct of the Japanese, in the realm of abstract ideas, seems always to have been materialist and practical. From their earliest initiation into Confucian and other Chinese philosophical systems it was chiefly the materialist or political principles of these that they sought to crystallise in conduct and method. There is the same bias to-day, though the nation, or the nation's educated mind, is saved from the possible bondage of a new political and social formalism—such as resulted from the excessive devotion to the purely material and political precept of Chinese philosophy—by its perception of the wide divergencies that occur between the principles of the various European systems. No doubt were the import into Japan of all philosophies save that of Spencer prohibited by circumstances or by official regulation, the ruling class would in due time inaugurate a Spencerian formalism. Through its materialistic bias the Japanese mind incurs a penalty. It tends to conceive the materialist estimate of truth as covering the whole field of philosophical values, and doing this it proceeds to transmute a body of philosophical precepts or principles into a tyrannical political formalism. Happily there are now so many philosophers to choose from that Japan is not in much danger of making the

mistake of accepting one of them to make a yoke of him! Japanese thinkers would rather be disposed to repudiate all of them, and fall back upon the dictates of pure reason. Indeed the latter—reason—as the basis of all philosophy, has come to be the only real court of appeal for the educated Japanese mind of these days. Philosophy is rather an exercise of intellect to it, or a tentative, semi-empirical effort to fathom the amusing mystery of the universe. Reason is the companion—the missal and the oracle—of the educated Japanese mind in its daily tasks.

Let us not, then, expect a Japanese system of philosophy. The political revolution in the country connotes, indeed, a convulsion of thought, but not a re-creation or re-birth of the Japanese mind, which has always been materialist rather than idealist,—unless in its art conceptions,—penetrative rather than comprehensive, analytical rather than synthetic. In the occidental view no philosophy is sufficient if it offers to satisfy only political needs. In the Japanese view politics are practically the whole of ethics, even as the interest of the State is nearly the whole of religion.

The materialism—political or utilitarian—of the modern educated mind of Japan in its attitude towards phenomena is exemplified by the ‘system’ of the only philosopher who might pretend to that name among all the speculative minds of ancient or modern Japan—Fukuzawa Yukichi who, after a remarkable career, died in 1901, universally honoured in his own country, and probably not undeserving some meed of international homage had there not been barriers of language, of geography, and of prejudice opposing the diffusion of his fame.

‘It is no exaggeration,’ says Professor Chamberlain, ‘to call Fukuzawa the intellectual father of more

than half the men who now direct the affairs of the country.' One of his Japanese disciples thus reviews this great man's career: 'It is impossible to find a parallel to the life of Mr. Fukuzawa in modern societies of Europe or America. He is often spoken of as an Arnold or a Carlyle of Japan. The comparison gives no just idea; he exercised a far greater influence than the designations "scholar" or "writer" would suggest. If we try to find his parallel in European history, the religious reformers of the period of the Reformation are the nearest types. But this is only true in respect of the wide influence they exerted over the society of their time; his reformation was not confined to the sphere of religion but covered every field of social activity. He was not a politician, yet he was fond of political discussion. Not only many enlightened politicians came out of his school, but also those actually in power in the government were often benefited by his advice and admonitions. At the same time he was educating the people by his copious writings in books and newspapers, and thus preparing the way for those enlightened politicians. The same was the case in matters of religion and business. He was not a man of religion, yet he knew the need of a sound religion. Nor was he a man of business, yet he upheld the modern importance of trade; and it was not seldom that religious and business classes were benefited by his advice, which he was always ready to give them. . . . We know he succeeded in a great measure in being at once the author and spectator of one of the most wonderful dramas ever played on the stage of History.'<sup>1</sup>

There was much in this man's method with life to

<sup>1</sup> From *A Life of Mr. Fukuzawa*, by Asatoro Miyamori (Tokyo, 1901). The book is in English, and its diction is quoted without alteration.

support his claim to rank as a philosopher ; yet he had no real 'system' to offer his countrymen or the world. His philosophy was in reality little more than an attitude ; not an inquiry and a theory. Of this 'attitude' it may be said that it was original and remarkable, because of the Japanese era and the Japanese *milieu*. In the total perspective of philosophy it would be original only as exhibiting a disciple of Epictetus proclaiming a positive ethic native to systems two thousand years more modern than that of the great Stoic. This Japanese philosopher lived his own life as if in truth most things were 'appearances' to him ; yet he taught very modern utilitarianism. As a Japanese citizen he was a true and admirable Stoic ; as a teacher he breathed the breath of intellectual life into many of the leading men of one of the most practical and materialistic of modern civilised States.

Born in 1834 to the privileges of Samurai rank—these were always important, though in Fukuzawa's case they were tempered by poverty—he displayed from his youth up a thirst for knowledge and a resolution and constancy in his pursuit of the means of satisfying it, such as may be quoted only of some of the heroic examples of intellectual devotion in the history of European progress. The learning of the West was then percolating into Japan through the channel of that fitful trade with the Dutch which was the one link betwixt Japan and the great world without for a space of two centuries and a half. Fukuzawa taught himself Dutch, one incident of his task being the copying in three weeks of the entire contents of a Dutch volume of two hundred pages on the art of fortification. When the 'opening' of the country took place, Fukuzawa found that not Dutch but English was the prevailing language among the foreigners who came to the country. So he

taught himself English. The story of this achievement is instructive as revealing the man and philosopher whose example, teaching, and method have been the most potent secondary influence in the development of the modern movement in Japan. 'In July 1859 Yokohama was opened to foreign trade.<sup>1</sup> In order to test the practical value of his knowledge of Dutch, Mr. Fukuzawa sought an early opportunity to visit the foreign settlement at Yokohama. In the space of twenty-four hours he walked there and back [from Tokyo]—forty miles in all—returning weary and foot-sore. That, however, was nothing compared with his depression at finding that the Dutch which he had so laboriously acquired was of no practical use to him. . . . He was much discouraged to think that, if he desired to maintain his standing as a scholar who was familiar with Western learning, it would be necessary for him to devote to learning English as much time and energy as he had already expended on Dutch. But his was not a nature to yield to discouragement. On that very day he determined to learn English. But how accomplish this purpose? There was in Yedo [Tokyo] no scholar who taught English. For some time he was at a loss what to do. At last he was delighted to learn that a certain Moriyama from Nagasaki, an interpreter of English, was then engaged in the service of the Bakufu [the government of the Shogun] to assist in making treaties with foreign nations. Mr. Fukuzawa called on him to beg his instruction in English. The interpreter assented, but he was so busy with his public duties that he could find only a little time, early in the morning and late in the evening, before and after his hours in the Foreign Department. At

<sup>1</sup> *A Life of Mr. Fukuzawa*, already quoted.

the specified time Mr. Fukuzawa walked from Teppozu to Moriyama's residence in Koishikawa—a distance of about five miles each way—during two or three months; but almost every time he called some unexpected event prevented Moriyama from teaching him. Thus disappointed, Mr. Fukuzawa decided to proceed without the aid of a teacher. For this purpose he proposed to use two small books—partly in Dutch, partly in English—which he had purchased at Yokohama. In addition he had need of an English-Dutch dictionary. But neither in Yedo [Tokyo] nor in Yokohama could such a dictionary be purchased. . . . After the failure of other plans he asked the clan authorities to buy him a pronouncing English-Dutch dictionary at the cost of five dollars; and having secured it, he began, without the aid of a personal teacher, most assiduously to study English. As he thought it might encourage him to have one or two fellow-students, he tried to persuade two friends to join him, but in vain. Nevertheless he found an earnest fellow-student. With the help of the English-Dutch dictionary they could with relative ease translate the sense; but the pronunciation was extremely difficult. Various expedients were adopted in order to obtain instruction in pronunciation. . . . Occasionally men who had by shipwreck been obliged to spend many years in foreign countries would come home to Japan. The zealous scholars were sure to call on them in order to get hints on English pronunciation. . . .' Fukuzawa was at this time twenty-five years of age.

Fukuzawa visited America (1860) and Europe (1862), as a subordinate member of embassies from the Shogunate government, which still held its own against the Mikado party. He was already apostate to the theory of Japanese civilisation; he returned from the

second of these visits an informed convert to Western ideas. Soon he became the apostle of the latter. The affinity of his point of view to the Stoic attitude is affirmed by his appraisal of 'appearances.' In the midst of the profound and widespread commotions of the struggle between the party of the Shogun and that of the Mikado, he 'did not show the least sympathy with either party.' He assumed a position of 'detachment,' 'hating formality and officialism from the bottom of his heart, while he had no ambition to attain political honours.' He resigned his rank as a Samurai and became a commoner, or man of the people. But there was a positive side to his attitude, which in philosophy is two thousand years more modern than Epictetus. He saw 'that it was of vital necessity to open the eyes of the great mass of the people who had no knowledge about the outside world.' He established a school and gave his spare time to the translation of European books, and to the authorship of original works treating of the methods, the institutions, and the ideas of the West. These ultimately numbered some fifty, in 107 volumes. He faithfully practised a cardinal principle of writing so as to be understood even by 'a servant-girl fresh from the country,' and before his death his works had circulated an average of 70,000 copies each, or some three and a half millions in all. He founded and directed a daily newspaper, which to-day is the most influential and most respectable of Japanese journals. In the earlier years of his mission, its unpopularity compelled him to take elaborate precautions against the risk of assassination; in his later years he was wont to travel incognito, to prevent the embarrassing homage of his countrymen. He refused all honours, and towards the end of his life a sum of £5000, granted



him by government as a reward for his immense services to the cause of modern progress in his country, he immediately devoted to the endowment of his school, now raised to the status of a university.

Clearly this is a life of Stoic practice, promulgating a positive precept resembling that of the utilitarian school of the nineteenth century. There is inherent contradiction in its philosophic 'attitude,' for, holding as of no account the rewards of achievements of individuality—as riches, learning, power—its master purpose nevertheless was to teach individualism, or, in Fukuzawa's own favourite definition, 'independence and self-respect.' For how did he code his teaching? And what was his 'system,' or the makeshift he offered in lieu of one?

His physics were at best a mere interrogation of phenomena. That is to say, he had none; and he did not allow, or did not conceive, that it was at all important that he should have them. 'The great machine of the Universe [he wrote], marvellously as it is constructed, shows no trace of any special constructor; and even if, for argument's sake, we coin the word "Creator" and apply it in this context, attaining thereby to apparent logical satisfaction, then we must find some maker for the maker of the Creator. Thus we should go on *ad infinitum*, and, when all was said and done, the only conclusion arrived at would be that the world is a great machine marvellously constructed. It is a great machine originated by chance, and we human beings are born by chance, and really form part of the machine.'<sup>1</sup> There is, of course, no 'system' here; the philosopher scarcely even interrogates phenomena; he is not plunged in a despairing anxiety to formulate a system—an anxiety springing from a real or imagined

<sup>1</sup> From 'Mr. Fukuzawa and His Views,' by Prof. Denig in the *Japan Mail*.

need of final truth and a complete explanation—that need which in the West has inspired an array of ‘systems,’ and made the Western philosopher as much a slave to universal dogma—though its name be translated to ‘scientific law’—as the Western religionist. Neither the philosophic nor the religious mind of Japan knows or allows this despotism of law or of dogma. In the case of Mr. Fukuzawa, this complacency in the face of the physical enigmas furnished the following general basis for his ethics : ‘Calm, unbiassed reflection shows us that the fact of human beings being born as human beings belongs to the same order as that of fish being fish, or birds being birds, or a man or woman of thirty being thirty ; there is in it no special cause for joy, or yet for astonishment. Nature suits man and all other living creatures. This is simply because nature is nature ; it is no mark of any special and particular favour. If nature did not suit man and other creatures, then men and things as we now know them would not exist on the surface of this globe—nay ! the globe itself could not wear its present aspect. Thus it is only because nature is suitable to their origination that things exist at all. It is not because things exist that we are justified in inferring any special favour towards them on nature’s part. To notice things and then treat them with particular kindness is an exclusively human trait, and it argues want of appreciation of the greatness of the great machine to judge nature’s handiwork by our petty schemes.’ The critic who is familiar with the conclusions of the most modern scientific rationalism — especially that based on the principle of the universal application of the evolutionary hypothesis — will here detect the remarkably modern quality of this Japanese

philosopher's interpretations, and it is, of course, unnecessary at this time of day to point out the fundamental identity of the physics of modern evolutionary rationalism with those of the greatest of the Greek systems. There is the same ancient flavour, and the same thoroughly modern substance in the resulting ethics of the Japanese thinker. Man is at once insignificant in the cosmos, and of incalculable importance to himself. 'Having come into the world,' says Mr. Fukuzawa, 'though we be nothing but maggots, we must make a suitable preparation for living. And this preparation for living will mean that though we regard life as a joke, we shall act as though it were a very serious affair, and endeavour to avoid both poverty and pain, and aim at obtaining wealth and pleasure, etc.' From this there follows, in Mr. Fukuzawa's quasi-system, that very contradiction—paradox or antinomy—which is inherent in the ethics of the most modern evolutionary systems of Europe. 'Though we be indeed insignificant parts of an enormous uncontrollable mechanism,' says Mr. Fukuzawa in effect, 'we must nevertheless apply our whole minds to the amelioration of our condition and the advancement of civilisation.' 'Though we be indeed subject to imperious and absolutely irrevocable laws,' say Haeckel, Kropotkin, and Kidd and other disciples or interpreters of Darwin and Spencer, 'we must apply our whole minds and energies to the acceleration of the processes of civilised progress.' In the case of evolutionary ethics this is the utilitarianism of the economic school of the middle nineteenth century idealised, enlarged, or glorified by the hope that there is a great opportunity for humanity in the conscious effort to harmonise or to ally human intelligence and individuality with the process and the dominion

of the evolutionary laws. The Japanese philosopher falls short of this conception merely from his lack of imagination, or his lack of the instinct for universal dogma in the shape of universal law. The universe to him is a sublime mechanism; to the most modern evolutionist it is this and something more—a living cosmos. Both affirm at once the importance and the unimportance of the individual; they differ somewhat as to the conditions under which individuality must achieve its ends. ‘Man finds himself,’ says Mr. Fukuzawa, ‘in possession of a mind that can free itself from all the trammels of time and space, and soar to sublime heights. This is some compensation for the extreme insignificance of his existence here, and at times it leads him to forget how unimportant he is. Compared with the existence of the millions of units of which the universe is composed the span of life of any individual man is infinitesimally trifling, and his remembering this helps him to bear his lot with composure; but it is given to him to conceive higher states of existence than any that he can enjoy—to live in a world of thought and imagination. His aspirations know no limits. The consciousness that he possesses an all-exploring mind imparts to his life a loftiness and dignity it would not otherwise possess.’ Accordingly, recognising the importance of the individual to himself, in spite of his insignificance in the universal mechanism of nature, Mr. Fukuzawa formulated a positive moral code. In a sense his success in tabulating his ethics in a series of twenty-nine precepts exhibits his conspicuous failure to attain large conceptions—his failure, in fact, to propose a real ‘system.’ There is little poetical or ideal majesty in a mechanical theory of nature and the universe—poetical or ideal majesty such as inheres in the con-

ception of a universal evolutionary process, even as much as in the theological systems. Modern evolutionary rationalism certainly tends to suggest or to evoke a moral code which shall have the vital sanction of alliance with universal law, even as the moral code of Christianity is allied with universal law imaged in the concept of a universal God. The Japanese philosopher proposed his code as a thing pertinent chiefly to the individual, which does not, or need not, link him either to a 'divine idea' or to a majestic process of progress. He is a materialist very nearly of the European economic school at the same time that he is one of the Stoics who, in a manner, anticipated the verdicts of the modern evolutionist. He is, nevertheless, closely in touch with many of the most modern tendencies; in some respects he is probably ahead of them. In the preamble to his code of morals he says: 'As to the question of how men and women of to-day should behave themselves, I must say that, diverse as have been codes of morals from ancient times, it is evident that a code must conform itself to the progress of the times, and that in a society like the present, characterised as it is by an ever-advancing civilisation, there must be a code specially suited to it. Hence it follows that tenets of personal morals and living must undergo change' [from time to time]. The first article of the code brings into focus the entire series of twenty-nine precepts: 'Every one must make it his duty to act as a man, and must endeavour to elevate his dignity and to enhance his virtue. Men and women must regard the principle of independence and self-respect as the cardinal tenet of personal morals and living, and by inscribing it deeply on their hearts must strive to discharge the duties proper to man.' The second defines a man 'of independence

and self-respect' as one who 'preserves the independence of both mind and body, and who pays due respect to his person in a way calculated to maintain the dignity proper to man.' 'Taking care of the body and keeping it healthy,' says the fourth precept, 'is a duty incumbent on us all by reason of the rules that govern human existence ; both body and mind must be kept in activity and in health, and anything calculated to impair their health, even in the least degree, must be rigidly avoided.' The code is wholly modern—even ultra-European—in its view of the position of women and the marriage relationship. The eighth precept is: 'The custom of regarding women as the inferiors of men is a vicious relic of barbarism. Men and women of any enlightened country must treat and love each other on a basis of equality, so that each may develop his or her own independence and self-respect'; and the ninth proceeds: 'Marriage being a most important affair in the life of man, the utmost care must be exercised in selecting a partner. It is the first essential of humanity for man and wife to cohabit till death separates them, and to entertain towards each other feelings of love and respect in such a way that neither of them shall lose his or her independence and self-respect.' It should be unnecessary to indicate that, in the Japanese social environment, these views are revolutionary. In promulgating them Mr. Fukuzawa was not merely echoing what he had heard or read of the social ethic of advanced European States. He had the clearest intellectual perception and an absolutely original conviction of the justice and the worth of these conclusions. They were the least popular and the least effective chapters of his gospel. The social status of women in modern Japan is practically what it was in

the Japan of pre-modern times. From the Christian point of view, or that of the modern evolutionist, who seeks to find authority for a code of altruistic ethics in the manifest obligations of the individual to a universal law of progressive evolution, Mr. Fukuzawa's code is chiefly deficient in its conception of the duty of the individual towards the mass of individuals. He has here no positive canon like the beautiful 'golden rule' of Christianity; he is merely negative, or merely conventional. His fifteenth precept says: 'It is a vulgar custom and unmanly practice unworthy of civilised people to entertain enmity towards each other, and to wreak vengeance upon them'; and the nineteenth, going a little way farther, declares that 'it is a philanthropic act, which may be regarded as a beautiful virtue of man, to hold the sentiment of sympathy and affection towards others, and so to endeavour not only to alleviate their pains but also to further their welfare.' On the other hand, Mr. Fukuzawa was again in unconscious sympathy with modern evolutionary ethics in his view of the idea of nationality. 'Many as are the nations existing on the earth,' he says, 'with different religions, languages, manners, and customs, the people constituting these nations are brethren, and hence no discrimination should be made in dealing with them. It is against the principles of independence and self-respect to bear one's self with arrogance, and to look down on people of a different nationality.'

It is evident that if, indeed, the advanced thought of Europe need make no pilgrimage to the shrine of this philosopher and moralist of Japan's modern era, as though to a new fountain of light, there is yet an admirably modern quality in his wisdom. He has no 'system' to offer us; no physics worth the name, and

no metaphysics; but his ethics are at least a surprising independent testimony to the existence of standards and principles of conduct, fundamental or quasi-permanent, in the essence of human consciousness under the *régime* of progressive or evolutionary civilisation.

At bottom Mr. Fukuzawa is doubtless a materialist and a utilitarian. Therein is he — was he — a true child of the modern Japanese era. He is at once a fair index of the philosophical ‘attitude’ of modern educated Japan, and an example of the possible achievement — of the limitations of the possible achievement — of Japanese educated thought in the future. In him there is accomplished to its destined purpose that convulsion of thought which must always precede or follow a political revolution in civilised States. In harmony as his ‘attitude’ in many respects is with the scientific conclusions and the moral definitions of the most modern European systems, it denotes by that very fact a swing of the pendulum of Japanese educated thought to the extremity of the arc opposite the narrow geometric formalism of the Chinese philosophy which held dominion over the Japanese mind of the eras preceding the modern. Fukuzawa represents the intellectual revolution which it is necessary to postulate of the Japanese political revolution, if the latter is to be accounted for philosophically. He represents the new ideas, the new principles, the new morals upon the sanctions of which the new civilisation of Japan must of necessity repose. This new civilisation is no more a mechanism than was the old; Fukuzawa reveals the sources — some of the sources — of its moral driving-force; he shows us, in part, its intellectual ‘soul,’ and thereby furnishes at least a partial philosophical explanation of its brilliant success. We need not see in



Japan a 'borrowed' civilisation succeeding by accident ; if we go far enough down we shall find an intellectual convulsion balancing—in the philosophical sense—a political revolution. Fukuzawa embodied this intellectual convulsion.

Springing from an intellectual convulsion, the modern Japanese philosophical attitude—as is apparent in the system of its foremost representative—is a materialistic attitude. As materialistic it takes no very serious view of philosophical 'systems' except as they throw light upon immediate political problems or problems of conduct having a close relation to politics. To account for its indifference to 'system'—to philosophy in the true sense, that is to say—we must refer to the history of the Japanese mind, which has never known universal religious dogma, and therefore does not, in its modern consciousness, yearn for the satisfaction of universal intellectual truth to take the place of universal religious dogma. Hence Japanese dilettantism—the espousal of Spencer yesterday, divorce to-day, and an alliance with Nietzsche to-morrow—with a serious covert motive of distilling the essential political usefulness of every 'system' in turn.

This materialism duly contemplates 'the independence and self-respect' of the individual as its main objective. Hence Mr. Fukuzawa's insistence on the importance of every man 'being his own bread-winner,' and his emphatic assertion of the duty of 'taking care of the body and keeping it healthy.' Hence also his inculcation of the importance of trade and commerce, which is in the very spirit of modern Japan, searching for the means of establishing its material competence. There follows, by logical necessity, an indifference to religion except as it may be politically useful. 'The

people,' says Mr. Fukuzawa in effect, 'are not and cannot for the present be educated up to the acceptance of the moral dicta of philosophy or dogmatic moral truth; therefore the power of supernaturalism, wielded by religion, may properly be employed to regulate their conduct.' This again is in the very spirit of modern Japan, which excludes religion from the educational curricula while it tolerates all religious professions, and accepts the responsibility of teaching morals in its elementary schools.

The Japanese attitude is materialistic, and it is not in this respect new. It is, however, modern in its repudiation of canon and dogma; it is ultra-modern in its conception of individualism, with a measure of responsibility to the mass of individuals. It is deficient chiefly in comprehensive idealism; for as it ignores universal religious dogma, it falls short also of the sublime concept of universal law—physical and intellectual. It is incapable of evoking a 'system,' while on the other hand it is free, by virtue of its eclectic disposition, from the danger of hoping for or believing in finality—economic, political, or moral. In this latter characteristic it is perhaps in sympathy—unconscious sympathy—with the instinct of the most modern evolutionary systems of Europe, groping, as these are, for a morality which shall bring humanity into relation with the immense, illimitable, unending processes of universal evolution, conceived as the dominating law behind the veil of phenomena.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The author has set forth Mr. Fukuzawa's life and views in some detail, because the latter are on the whole more representative of the tendencies of modern Japanese philosophical speculation than the views of any other Japanese thinker. It must be understood, however, that it is quite impossible, in a volume such as the present, to survey adequately or comprehensively the whole field of the modern thought, religious and philosophical, of Japan. In this and subsequent chapters the author has merely endeavoured to disentangle, from the truly remarkable medley of specula-

tion in which the modern Japanese mind is involved, the thread or threads which appear to him to 'connect,' so to speak, with the clues by the aid of which the universal mind of man seeks to emerge from the labyrinth in which it is for the time being confused, mainly through the disappearance of the traditional sanctions of religion and the collateral appearance of wholly new and therefore revolutionary ideas in philosophy. It must be understood that any inferences, stated in this and other chapters, as to the philosophical or speculative 'message' of Japan—or of Japanese thought—are the author's own, and not therefore recommended by the authority of the thought-energy underlying that portentous material fact—modern Japan. The convulsion of thought attending the Japanese political revolution is in reality following the latter instead of having preceded it—another example, perhaps, of the topsy-turveydom of Japan! From this convulsion Mr. Fukuzawa Yukichi has been the only thinker to emerge with a plausible 'system.' It must not, however, be inferred that he is an isolated example of a modern Japanese mind grappling with the skeins of modern doubt and speculation. In recent years there has been much agitation of metaphysical and religious problems of all kinds in Japan. But except in the case of Mr. Fukuzawa this agitation has thrown up nothing solid, and little that is even definite.

## XXIII

### INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL AIMS

IT has been shown that the modern movement in Japan was almost of necessity a movement to achieve a material competence equal to that of the advanced States of the time. And the leaders of the movement early perceived that modern material competence reposes chiefly on wealth—trade, industry, commerce. It follows, then, that one of the dominating motives of the Japan of to-day is an industrial and commercial motive. Japan aims at industrial and commercial greatness; at industrial and commercial power; at the free exploitation of the opportunities lying along the path of this species of power. It may be that in the satisfaction of this motive she seeks but to compass the control of a certain means to a certain end. Under modern conditions ethical motive, idealistic motive of any kind, seems always to repose for its authority upon the sanctions of material power. Empire itself—the first aim, and, as it used to seem, of necessity the first aim, of the sovereignties of the past—holds no longer an indisputable priority. In Eastern Asia itself the leading Western Powers contend not so much for empire as for free commercial opportunity under the name of the ‘open door.’ It seems as if they began to feel that

empire is no longer necessary, or that unfettered commercial opportunity is as much as empire without the expense and the trouble of empire. The Powers seem more and more inclined to let the idea go by the board if they may secure the substance behind it. It may be possible to apprehend in the facts the soul of an increasingly materialistic age.

Be the larger significance of the facts what it may, it is certain that Japan has hit, with marvellous aptitude, the instinct and mood of the age. She has perceived, almost intuitively as it seems, that the first condition of power in the world of to-day is wealth. There are those who would counsel her, there are those who have counselled her, to ignore that condition and at least attempt to show that civilisation may and should be connoted by other terms—that the media of its humanising influence need not of necessity be struck in a gross currency of gold. But Japan's choice, as by instinct, is to accept the age at its own valuation; to accept its own standards of appraisal; to meet it upon its own ground and with its own weapons. Nobody, observing the evidences of the time, doubts that power is most truly expressed in terms of wealth. Japan very early perceived this 'stream of tendency,' and to-day her dominating motive is an industrial and commercial motive. Undoubtedly she reserves a 'larger hope,' but she realises that which the age compels her to learn, that the ideals of her heart must advance under protection of a buckler of power on her arm. Japan, preparing to fight the age with its own weapons, is a figure which might be beheld as an image of the 'cursed spite' of fate taunting the age with its own grossness.

Yet, even if it were not the proper persuasion of Japanese statesmen that wealth, under the conditions of

the time, is one of the important forms of power and one of the most necessary allies of responsibility, a peculiar anomaly in Japan's international status directs them to the conquest of a first position among the commercial and industrial Powers of the world.

Already, before her war with Russia, Japan was a formidable political Power—potentially, indeed, what she now is, a first-class Power. In this character she was curiously differentiated from all the other Great Powers: the greatness of her political prestige was in curious contrast to the inadequacy of her financial competence. She already sustained the rôle of a Great Power in the Far East while still incomparably the inferior of all the Great Powers in point of wealth. Dowered now—from her success in war with a Great Power—with an enormously enhanced prestige, and weighted with greatly increased political responsibilities, her means of achieving wealth, her industries and commerce, remain as they were before the war, meagrely equipped, inefficiently organised, and feeble from sheer lack of the life-blood of capital. It is clearly incumbent on Japanese statesmen, alive to their responsibilities, to correct the extraordinary and always perilous anomaly of a country politically great but financially poor.

Because Japan is a Great Power, and at the same time comparatively a poor State, a leading motive—perhaps the leading motive—of Japanese policy in the immediate future must evidently be industrial and commercial expansion rather than territorial aggrandisement.

The general lines of Japanese industrial and commercial policy are very clearly ordained, by her geographical situation and the state of her own industrial economy. The latter at present imposes upon her the necessity of importing from abroad nearly all

the products of expensive or highly organised industry. She has to improve, to enlarge, to equip her industrial economy, in order, in the first place, to supply her own need of these products. Her geographical situation is incomparably superior to that of any possible competitor for the supply of the Chinese and Far Eastern market, a market offering a prodigious opportunity already observed by Japan's European and American trade rivals. The main objectives of Japan's future industrial and commercial development are thus very obvious. In proportion as the line of least resistance is manifest it is possible to avoid dissipation of energy. Japan has, or ought to have, the clearest possible view of the weakest points in the defence of her commercial rivals. She is thus able, or ought to be able, to contrive those suitable concentrations of effort which are a large part of the secret of success in the adventures of the commercial struggle as in the trials of war itself.

The twin purposes of her industrial and commercial policy—the supply of her own need of the staple products of modern industry, and the supply of the Chinese market with an ultimate surplus of production—are plainly disclosed in the recent records of Japanese cotton manufacture. Japan is herself a large consumer of cotton; the workaday dress of the larger part of her population is chiefly of this material. She can never grow all the raw material she needs, but there is no reason—she sees no reason—why she should not manufacture cotton stuffs to the limit of her own wants, and, with the lapse of time and the higher organisation and more elaborate equipment of her industrial system, send a surplus to the Chinese market. She begins—she began—by attacking the earliest process in the working up of the material. She went into cotton-

spinning with the intention, first, of meeting her own needs, and afterwards of exporting. In 1894 there were 476,000 spindles in operation ; in 1904 there were 1,300,000. In 1894 the yarn imported was £800,000 worth ; in 1904 it was scarcely £35,000 worth.<sup>1</sup> In 1892 the value of the yarn exported was not £1000 ; in 1905 it was £3,325,000. She has begun to attack the higher manufacturing processes, but her import of cotton flannel is double her export ; she buys from three times to six times more cotton prints, satins, and shirtings than she sells. Not much more than a tendency is here manifest ; but there is no doubt as to which way it points. 'The trade in cotton yarns,' says a British official report from Tokyo on the trade of Japan in 1902, 'in consequence of Japanese mills having sprung up all over the country, is practically at an end. The import of cotton yarns is certain to go on decreasing.' Without indulging a futile expectation of achieving the comfortable and formidable situation of a completely self-supporting state, Japan shapes her commercial policy to the end of utilising her immensely important advantage of cheap and abundant labour for the displacement of the foreign import of the commoner manufactured staples, at first by a sufficient production for home consumption, and afterwards by the production of a surplus for export,—in competition with Europe and America,—to her obvious market in China. She has carried this policy to practical success in cotton yarn ; she has laid, or hopes that she has laid, the foundations of equal success in other staples whose manufacture is European in origin. Her success is already, for example, equally great in the comparatively rough and simple processes of match manufacture. A

<sup>1</sup> The import was £170,000 worth in 1905.



few years since she imported European matches in large quantities. She now supplies her own wants, and distributes between £800,000 and £900,000 worth per year throughout Asiatic markets and farther afield. But her success is as yet confined to those more primitive manufactures in which success does not hang upon conditions of highly developed industrial skill or great wealth of capitalistic resource. Isolated and sporadic experiment is made indeed in nearly every species of modern manufacture, but Japan's resources of capital, on the one hand, and of industrial and technical competence, on the other, are at present wholly inadequate to the speedy realisation of her ambition to displace the import of costly or highly finished products from Europe and America. Such specialities of highly organised industry as railway locomotives and marine engines are far beyond the average standard of her attempt; but even now there are Japanese shipbuilding yards—as at Kobe and Nagasaki—where many of the accessories for steamship construction are finished in expensively equipped machine shops. By importing the more delicate and costly details, the builders are able to turn out steamships of the highest class; and though, obviously, these cannot be cited as average examples of Japanese manufactures, they are clearly an earnest of considerable progress in the multitude of allied arts—entirely Western in origin and development—proficiency in which is a necessary postulate of success in elaborate and highly finished manufactures.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese import

<sup>1</sup> The Japanese Department of Agriculture and Commerce recently (1903) issued an interesting report on the country's industries of purely foreign origin—introduced, that is to say, as the result of the 'opening' of the country and the consequent access of European science and knowledge. As this report exhibits more clearly

of foreign locomotives has averaged over £200,000 worth annually in the last decade, but in the Government workshops at Kobe locomotives have already been turned out, of Japanese origin in every detail save the paper plan. The development of contributory industries like iron and steel production—Japan has ore of

than any outside observer might, the scope of these industrial attempts and the measure of success attained, I give a *résumé*:

‘Cotton Yarns.—In 1861 the Kagoshima clan imported from England a spinning machine with 6000 spindles. This was the beginning of the industry. In 1879 there were three mills with 8204 spindles. In 1900 the number was 80, with 1,144,027 spindles, turning out yarn to the value of £7,362,000, with goods exported to the value of £2,051,000.

‘Timepieces.—In 1875 a firm was established at Azabu [Tokyo] for the first time. The value of clocks manufactured in Tokyo and Nagoya is about £50,000. £28,000 worth were exported in 1901.

‘European Musical Instruments.—Of these there are now manufactured in Japan organs, pianos, and violins, and “such progress has been made that the quality of the goods made in this country is considered to be in no way inferior to that of those imported from Europe and America.”

‘Surgical Instruments.—The importation of these instruments has practically stopped. They are chiefly made in Tokyo, where the annual production is about £2000 worth a year.

‘European Dress.—At the present time very good shirts, collars, etc., are made in Japan, and the importation of these articles has now almost entirely ceased. Of hats and caps the manufacture now amounts to from £10,000 to £60,000 worth yearly. The manufacture of boots and shoes began in 1870. The industry is now prosperous.

‘European Umbrellas.—First started about the year 1873, and now produced to the value of £400,000 a year, and exported to China, India, and the South Sea Islands to the value of £100,000 annually.

‘Brushes.—This manufacture was begun some years ago. The value of the export in 1901 was about £45,000.

‘Glass.—In 1876 the old Public Works Department established a glass factory at Shinagawa [Tokyo]. Glass ware is now produced sufficient for the home demand. The annual value of the total manufacture has reached £1,150,000. It is exported to China, Hong-Kong, British India, Asiatic Russia, and Korea to the amount of £60,000 yearly. No sheet or plate glass is yet made.’

Other manufactures of foreign origin mentioned in the report are buttons, soaps, and perfumery. It would be easy to overrate the significance of the facts and statistics given in this report, and they do not, in fact, affect the general conclusions stated in the text. Most of the ‘lines’ mentioned in the report, it will be observed, are such as demand only a small measure of competence in technical skill. And even so, residence in the Far East soon engenders distrust of the economy that purchases Japanese umbrellas, or clocks, or lamp chimneys because they are cheap. Experience teaches that they are often—as yet—‘nasty’ as well as cheap.

her own, or it is available in illimitable quantities in China, but she still imports most of her consumpt of pig, bar, and sheet iron, as well as of steel rails and plates—has to precede Japan's successful or sufficient production of examples in the highest classes of industrial manufacture. And it is undoubtedly true that that successful or sufficient production waits upon the training of a necessary army of efficient industrials as well as upon the acquisition of the capital resources for more adequate provision of the *matériel* of production. Japan, in short, needs skilled workers and capital before she can hope to enter the lists, in her own market or the Chinese, against the highly finished product of Europe and America.

It seems difficult to reconcile an assertion of Japanese industrial inefficiency with the demonstration the country has recently given the world of absolute mastery of the technical and mechanical detail of modern engines of war, and to accuse the generals of the Japanese industrial and commercial army of failure to comprehend or to apply the first principles of commercial and industrial success—such principles as efficient organisation, conservation of resources, economy of manual and mechanical power—seems an assertion of paradox in face of the proven brilliancy of Japanese generalship in war, whether in respect of its capacity for organisation, or strategy, or for actual leadership in the field. The paradox is only apparent; or rather it does not exist; for, as has already been shown, there is the sharpest possible contrast between Japanese methods in national affairs—in the sphere of the education and enlightenment of the Japanese leaders—and Japanese methods in nearly every sphere of private activity, industrial and commercial.

The training of a class of skilled workers, to serve the industries and trades of European origin in which Japan expects to engage extensively, waits upon the introduction of an efficient apprenticeship system. Speaking generally, the practice sanctioned by the custom and tradition of purely native industries has been carried into the organisation of trades and manufactures introduced from abroad. How widely this practice differs from that obtaining in Western industrial systems, where the apprentice relationship has been placed on a very clear and rigidly legal basis, will be apparent from the following quotation from a recent report to the Japanese Department of Agriculture and Commerce on workshops and operatives: 'Apprenticeship System.—Merchants employ boys from ten years old for a term of ten or fifteen years. For the first three years the boy receives no recompense except free board, and a suit of clothes every season. After three years, when he is tolerably familiar with the business and in some degree useful to the master, a small sum by way of pocket-money is allowed him. In the sixth or seventh year he takes the position of clerk or *tedai*, and receives a monthly salary of from one to two and a half yen [two shillings to five shillings]. When the full time expires, the clerk, if he continues in the master's employment, receives remuneration ranging from twenty to thirty-five yen [£2 to £3, 10s.]. In some exceptional cases the term of apprenticeship extends to as long as twenty or twenty-five years. In these cases, on the expiration of the term the clerk is supplied with funds by his master and establishes himself in business. But the assistance so given by the master creates a bond something like the family relation. The master is entitled to interfere in the

domestic affairs of his former apprentice, while the latter is expected to render him obedience. Nowadays very few cases of this kind are to be found. Apprenticeship to master mechanics or artisans differs little from the practice in the commercial trades. Apprentices to blacksmiths and carpenters must supply their own clothes until they are able to handle the tools with some measure of skill, when they are provided with clothes, and also with a little money. At seventeen or eighteen years of age they receive one-half the wage of a fully qualified operative. But the custom decrees that a portion of their earnings goes to the master. On the expiry of their term they acquire an independent status, and have no further relations whatever with their former master.'

The relation of master and apprentice, it will be seen, is loose and irregular by comparison with the rigid and mutually obligatory engagements of the indenture system. And in fact the looseness and irregularity—the inefficiency—of the engagement sufficiently explain one of its leading results: in a large proportion of cases the apprentice fails to complete the term of service, and by drifting into other occupations not only forfeits the prospect of acquiring that technical skill the absence of which in the Japanese workman has made him a byword among competent foreign observers, but plants in his character as an industrial unit a fugitive and aimless habit that extinguishes the capacity for concentration, and even for seriousness of purpose. The Japanese artisan too commonly displays a defect of method and of attitude which seems to be almost a fault of character, though in fact it is perhaps only the inevitable result of his imperfect training. Here, as almost everywhere else away from direct

official control or example, Japanese appearances betray a quality of irresponsibility and superficiality which, if it connote a certain freedom from the oppressions of the 'strenuous life,' also represents in the nation at large a certain incapacity for the crises of a great industrial and commercial career. And if the Japanese operative, whether by his own fault or the fault of the traditional system of which he is the child, fails as yet to attain the standards of skill ruling among the units of the industrial orders of the West, it is also true that the capitalist organisation which employs him is very often, as to equipment, management, and organisation, an equally inferior example of efficiency of method and concentration of effort. In a large measure, indeed, the poverty of equipment and deficiency of method in the Japanese workshops and factories of the time only illustrate Japan's lack of capital, but the actual management, even of the best and the wealthiest industrial enterprises in the country, often fails in the observance of many simple rules of policy and conduct, the practice of which would itself be an important aid to the upbuilding of the financial strength which Japanese industry, at the present stage of its history, must of necessity lack.

In a rather remarkable communication to the Japanese press in January 1903 Baron Iwasaki, a leading figure in Japanese industry and commerce, indicated his clear perception of the salient defects of method manifest throughout this sphere to the ordinary foreign observer. Baron Iwasaki correctly analysed the great deficiency as being truly a fault of *morale*. 'We have done little,' he said, 'towards educating ourselves in the fundamental moral standpoint of the commerce and industry of the leading European countries. . . . I

mean that the men in charge of our commercial and manufacturing undertakings are unfortunately wanting in the sense of responsibility, as also in devotion to duty, in discipline, in fidelity to engagements, and in the practice of a good example to their subordinates. . . . The ill-success attending many of our recent efforts along commercial and industrial lines is the inevitable consequence of the lack of an adequate sense of responsibility in the men charged with their management.'

The commercial immorality of the Japanese import and export merchant, of which his confrère the foreign merchant complains to-day with as much justice as have his predecessors at any period since the opening of Japan to the world, is perhaps only a particular symptom of a general or fundamental failure—the failure of the habit or instinct of responsibility in the Japanese commercial class. The unfortunate effect of this failure, as exhibited in the practice of the Japanese merchant in his business relations with the foreign trader, is clearly perceived by the Japanese leaders, who deplore it as a serious hindrance to the country's commercial progress and prestige. Three-fourths of Japan's foreign trade, import and export, is done through aliens resident in Japan; practically the whole of the trade with Europe and America passes through their hands as middlemen, and the Japanese—the Japanese leaders at any rate—view their necessary interposition as an unnecessary tax upon the profits of the country's foreign trade. Naturally Japan desires, like other States of high political status, to get her own trade into her own hands, and to reap the just rewards of its exclusive control. No fact more clearly illustrates the catalogue of anomalies which is the major part of

the current history of the modern era in Japan than the country's failure to achieve commercial autonomy—for this is the practical meaning of the foreign trader's presence in Japan—the while she has carved out for herself, by triumphs of war which have been the wonder of the world, a place among the first-class political Powers. Moreover, while the Japanese government has succeeded no less by its honourable standards of conduct in diplomatic method than by its achievement in war in commending itself to the Powers of the world, the Japanese commercial *régime*, in its foreign relations, has scarcely succeeded in proving its desire to be honest. The facts represent the omnipresent Japanese antinomy. Politically, Japan is represented by the modern enlightenment of its leaders; its commercial agents are still the children of Japanese tradition. European, American, Australian manufacturers and exporters decline to enter into relations with Japanese buyers save through a foreign agent resident in Japan, yet the country's diplomatic representatives may now negotiate on equal terms of prestige with the representatives of the first-class Powers. There is little probability of a speedy change in these conditions. The Japanese commercial class, however sincere its effort in the future, is likely to find that the acquisition of international credit is a task at least as onerous as has been the conquest of international prestige by the managers of the country's politics. No doubt some of the force of the immense moral and material movement which the successful close of a great war has initiated in Japan will be spent in an effort to educate an improved standard of conduct in the commercial and manufacturing class. But the country's commerce and industry labour under the dis-



ability of a poverty of capital, only second in deleterious effect to the defective *morale* of its agents and servants.

The defective *morale* and deficiency of capital resources hindering the progress of Japanese industry and commerce may to some extent be brought together as cause and effect. The ablest intelligences of the country perceive that the only proper, if not the only possible solution of the difficulties of Japanese industry which occur from its poverty of capital, is the introduction of capital from abroad. Already, indeed, foreign money, especially American, has found profitable employment in Japanese industries and manufactures. Petroleum areas occur in some of the northerly provinces, and American capital, in consort with Japanese, or operating through Japanese agents, has secured the more valuable options. In the native tobacco industry a Japanese-American corporation, with a capital responsibility of half a million sterling on each side, has had a career, beginning in 1899, successful alike in a personal and in a financial sense.<sup>1</sup> Yet the general insecurity of conditions, the stigma of unreliability which the Japanese merchant class does little to remove from the country's commercial character, the inference of dubious legal security which is inevitably drawn from numerous recent precedents—these are factors militating against the favourable reception of Japanese invitations to foreign capital. And it cannot truly be said that the sentiment of the country as a whole has yet been won over to complacency, still less to enthusiasm, towards any prospect

<sup>1</sup> A recent report of the Japanese Finance Department estimates the net annual profits of foreigners in business (in the import and export trade, that is) in Japan at £484,000. The foreign capital in Japanese industries (in conjunction with Japanese capital) is put at about £500,000. The Japanese Government has recently taken over tobacco manufacture as a State industry.

of the exploitation of native resources by alien capital and alien energies.

Since Japan proceeds with her endeavour to raise a fabric of industrial power in spite of her comparative paucity of means, that which is the fact might readily be inferred—the labour conditions within the pale of the fabric so far as raised are often primitive and sometimes barbarous, even as they were primitive and barbarous in Great Britain before the era of factory legislation. The remarkable progress of the Japanese spinning industry in the last decade should not, as it does not, wholly blind the eyes of the country to the evils of child labour and the employment of women without legal protection against practical impressment into any class of work. Japanese mills have been able to undercut the Indian in the Chinese and other markets, but the submission to a recent session of the Diet of a first Factory Bill shows that this success has been bought at a price which a public opinion educated in the sense of communal responsibility for the social conditions of the time would not tolerate. In point of fact, this educated opinion does not exist in Japan, but fortunately the enlightenment of the Japanese leaders seldom fails to take its place. The Factory Bill in question promises to enact most of the provisions which have raised the conditions of factory labour to their present level in Western Europe. They will affect some 7000 factories employing between 400,000 and 500,000 hands.

The improvement of labour conditions, the steady rise in economic values and in the standards of life among the masses of the people—very potent facts of the day in Japan—represent, of course, a gradual augmentation of the cost of Japanese labour. Yet, as against Europe and

America—whence Japan expects in the future, as she experiences in the present, the most serious competitive obstacles to the success of her designs upon the trade of China and Eastern Asia,—as against Europe and America Japan easily wields, and will for long wield, cheap labour as her most powerful industrial weapon. And ultimately her proximity to the Chinese market—the Pacific market as a whole—as against her chief rivals, must be a considerable if not a decisive aid to her success. Moreover, Japan is not likely to be confused or crippled in the pursuit of her high commercial and industrial purposes by serious difficulties between labour and capital in her industrial arena. It is true that already there has been organised protest by the labouring classes against the perpetuation of their condition of practical exclusion from true economic or political status, but many features of the social situation in Japan forbid any assumption of truly formidable or uncompromisingly aggressive action—economic or political—by the class of workers. In the commercial and industrial war Japan has most to apprehend from her poverty of capital resources, from the absence of what Baron Iwasaki properly defines as *morale* among her industrial organisers and managers, and from the insufficiency of technical skill and technical ‘conscience’ among her artisans. The world may expect that, following splendid success in a great war, she will make a great effort to correct or to supply these defects and deficiencies, and it is always to be remembered that in almost every sphere of her modern activity Japan, as represented by her leaders, knows herself to be scarcely beyond the threshold of her immense enterprise. That is to say, she realises, or at least the Japanese leaders realise, how much is still required of effort and of education.

In the statesmanship of commerce the leaders are competent—as competent as in the statesmanship of politics. They take it upon them, by commissions of inquiry, by a universal search for the best models and the best methods, by official example and direct official aid and encouragement, to lead the commerce and industry of the country along the path of its obvious future. Their reasoned judgment on the whole favours a partially protective policy when Japan shall fully recover her fiscal autonomy, the partial alienation of which went into the price she paid for that gift of Western civilisation, the acceptance of which she as yet has no substantial reason to regret.

## XXIV

### THE CONSTITUTION AND ITS DIFFICULTIES

No question can be made of the comparative failure of the Japanese Constitution of 1889. Nor can it be denied that recent events have emphasised its failure by illustrating its defects. The truth—one truth—is that Japanese politics illustrate an axiom which Montesquieu states thus: ‘In the infancy of States it is the leaders who make the institutions; afterwards the institutions make the leaders.’ Japan, though not an infant State, is in the infancy of her experience—one should perhaps say in the infancy of her experiment—with a new state polity. The revolution, which is Japan’s modern era, now thirty or forty years old, informally enfranchised the nation, previously without recognised political status. This enfranchisement, though partial, was an entirely new conception of the State for Japan; it begot, in fact, a new State, and in its infancy the new State illustrates the general maxim that, under the conditions of a political infancy, leaders inevitably count for more than institutions.

There is, it seems, no perfect condition of reforming effort and no perfect result. The necessary condition of Japan’s huge effort of reform was the domination,

almost despotic, of a small group of leading men. The result, so far, is the necessity of their continued domination. The leading political motive of their effort—or its consummation—is still a far-off, unrealised hope. Their reforming effort contemplated a new State—at the least a new polity. In this new polity the people seemed predestined to be the leading motive. The ultimate aim of the group of leaders, though at the beginning they scarcely knew it, was to educate the people to take their, the leaders', place in the polity. An antinomy is apparent. A group of leaders undertook the re-creation of the State with an implied intention that their effort should be of no effect with reference to themselves. They undertook a great personal effort in the hope of carrying it to success in an impersonal way. The spirit of Japan's modern era is the composite mind of a few great men who, as of necessity, have ever had in view the apparition of the spirit of the people. They proposed to erect the fabric of a new *régime* which, upon completion, should seem, as it were, to have grown from the ground. There was to be nothing in the fabric that should suggest an architect. But, of course, this purpose has been defeated. The general maxim holds with regard to Japan: in the infancy of States the leaders make the institutions. In the infancy of States the leaders are the institutions.

The Japanese Constitution affirms the responsibility of ministers to the Crown—to the Emperor. The sovereignty of the State is conceived as residing in the Emperor. Unless it be possible to regard the sovereignty of the State apart from the State itself, the theory of an exclusively Imperial sovereignty seems to ignore the people. It is, in fact, difficult to discern from the written Constitution of Japan exactly what

is the theory of the people's place in the polity of that Constitution. Japan's modern era was inaugurated when the present Emperor, in 1869, took a solemn oath to establish a deliberative assembly, and promising that 'all measures should be decided in accordance with public opinion.'<sup>1</sup> The Constitution of 1889 inaugurated the promised deliberative assembly and thus ostensibly provided the medium for the decision of all measures 'in accordance with public opinion.' But the Constitution affirms the responsibility of ministers to the Sovereign, and as clearly as possible invests the Emperor with the exclusive sovereignty of the State.

Had the group of leaders at whose instance the present Emperor took the oath of 1869—the group, or their survivors, who, with Marquis Ito as controlling spirit, framed the Constitution—had the group of leaders in practice adhered to the strict letter of the Constitution, and refused to countenance every movement, every agitation, and every interpretation of the theory of the Constitution that seemed prospectively to menace the single and undivided sovereignty of the Emperor, or to modify the assertion of ministerial responsibility to him alone, it is conceivable that, after the lapse of no very considerable period of practice, the Constitution might have been a success. The people of Japan are in the mass indifferent to, or more often perhaps ignorant of, theories of individual political right; and the new era has opened up prospects so extensive and bewildering in other directions, that they might well be content to explore these the while they remained in happy or unhappy ignorance of the possibilities of strife and faction

<sup>1</sup> It is certain that the original leaders in the Japanese revolution never contemplated the ultimate enfranchisement of the Japanese people, but that enfranchisement was really inherent in the logic of the events which they set agoing.

that underlie the assertion and often attend the development of theories of individual political right. In effect, however, the group of reform leaders, though themselves perhaps scarcely aware that they did so, encouraged the growth of a theory of individual political right upon which ultimately the fabric of the State itself was to repose. The beginning of the reform era was the Emperor's oath, taken at the instance of the group of reform leaders, 'to decide all measures in accordance with public opinion'—a clear statement of that theory of popular rights which lies at the base of the leading political organisations of the West. From the express declarations of the Constitution it might, however, be judged that the paramount consideration presenting itself to its framers was the inviolability of the Emperor's sovereignty, and had the reform leaders afterwards—that is to say, from the time of the inauguration of the Constitution—unmistakably adhered to the Constitution's affirmation of the inviolability of the Imperial sovereignty, it is probable, as has been said, that the operation of the Constitution would have slowly inured to success. But the reform leaders have not been consistent in their attitude towards the Constitution. A primary condition of the success of any written constitution of necessity is that its success shall be achieved within the limits, or by virtue of the limitations, of its clear and rigid interpretation. Only thus may a written Constitution acquire that halo of respect which in the lapse of years becomes a kind of infallibility, which men fear to challenge even by the innovation of what may appear to be beneficial amendment.

From the acts of its framers it is to be inferred either that the Japanese Constitution of 1889 lends itself to a confused interpretation, or that its framers have con-



nived at proceedings which are not in consonance with its clear interpretation. The result—the unfortunate result—is the same in either case.

Political parties were already in existence in Japan before the opening of the constitutional chambers in 1890. The original group of reform leaders, or their survivors, had all along acted as a quasi-council of ruling elders, reconstructing or reshaping the entire framework of the State, under the presidency of the Emperor, and with the sanction of his authority. They were formally independent of public opinion ; the only weighty criticism of their work was the fact of its success or failure. Yet, practically from the fall of feudalism in 1871, inchoate factions were born from the jealousies or the aspirations of the crowd of lesser men below the ruling group. As time passed the constitutional question became paramount, and, with a motive either of hastening the advent of the constitutional *régime* or of anticipating the opportunities which, from European analogies, that *régime* might be expected to offer to organised parties, one or two members of the group of leaders detached themselves from the general body and accepted the headship of existing parties or organised new combinations of their own. But the majority of the reform leaders—the Elder Statesmen of to-day—awaited the coming of the Constitution without attempting to secure a party following such as might guarantee their status and pretensions under the conditions of a parliamentary system. Hitherto they had had charge over the State and its affairs, because with them had originated the great movement towards a reformed State, as by them it had been carried to success. The prestige of their work, the peculiar prescriptions of their historical title, were sufficient to render their power and position

unassailable in the bureaucratic polity preceding that of the Constitution. But how might they expect to prosper under the conditions of a parliamentary system if they declined, as they did decline, to accept the apparent necessity of party support?

The Constitution, on promulgation, affirmed the inviolability of the Emperor's sovereign power, his freedom in the choice of ministers, and the responsibility of ministers to him and not to the people. It is evident that, if this affirmation were rigidly adhered to in the practice of the Constitution, parties need not expect to attain a dominating, or even an important, position among the powers of State. Politicians who had hoped that the Constitution would recognise the people as the eminent power in the State, and had therefore anticipated, with the Constitution, the inauguration of an era of party government analogous to the system of Great Britain—these were, in fact, at once disillusioned and disappointed by the express intimations of the Constitution.

Now, as has been said, it is highly probable that, after a brief period of discontent, possibly of agitation, among the political parties, the working of the Constitution on the basis of the recognition of the Emperor's inviolable sovereignty and ministerial responsibility to him, as affirmed in its articles, would have inured to success. The motive of Japanese political parties was, and is, derived not from the instructed opinion of the mass of the Japanese people—among whom in fact political opinion is as yet quite undeveloped—but from the personal preferences and predilections of the politicians composing them. Under the sustained pressure of a strict adherence to the letter of the Constitution—disallowing the parties by its intimation of Imperial and

ministerial independence—a hope might reasonably have been indulged that the parties ultimately would accept a subordinate place among the images of power in the temple of the State. In fact, however, there has been no such strict adherence to the letter of the Constitution by the reform leaders—the Elder Statesmen. Neither by their speech nor by their action have they shown that they conceive an irrevocable interpretation of the Constitution. By darkness of speech they have allowed the party politicians to conclude that, in practice, the affirmations of the Constitution may be wrested from their obvious meaning; by inconsistency of action on the same crucial question they have themselves almost stopped the growth of the halo of quasi-infallibility necessary to the firm establishment of any written Constitution.<sup>1</sup>

For eight years—from 1890 to 1898—members of the group of reform leaders, or, as they were now called, the Elder Statesmen, continued, without party support, to be the real and nominal chiefs of govern-

<sup>1</sup> Captain Brinkley,—an authority of the first order,—in *Japan*, vol. iv. chap. vi. p. 243, in describing the circumstances the framers of the Constitution were required to meet, and their intention in meeting them as they did, says: 'The makers of the New Japan understood that so long as the sovereignty and inviolability of the Imperial prerogative could be preserved, the nation would be held by a strong anchor from drifting into dangerous waters. They laboured under no misapprehension about the inevitable issue of their work in framing the Constitution. They knew very well that party Cabinets are an essential outcome of representative institutions, and that to some kind of party Cabinets Japan must come. But they regarded the Imperial mandate as a conservative safeguard pending the organisation of parties competent to form Cabinets.'

There is, of course, inherent contradiction in the idea of the co-existence of an 'inviolable' Imperial prerogative and party Cabinets, and, beyond this, the Emperor is more than a political fact in Japan. He is, as is frequently stated in this volume, a religious, or, at any rate, a semi-religious, fact, and interference with his political prerogative by party Cabinets—their necessary interference if they are to be Cabinets that govern—is, or will be, an injury, irretrievable, and probably of the most serious import, to an idea more potent than the Imperial prerogative to prevent the nation 'from drifting into dangerous waters,'—the sacrosanctity of the Imperial dynasty.

ment. They had neglected, as it seemed, to secure their future by the organisation of a party following in the years between the definite promise of a Constitution and its inauguration in 1890; but, in fact, when the Constitution arrived, it appeared that their indifference had merely been a form of prescience. They enjoyed the Emperor's confidence, for the Emperor owed everything to them. And the Constitution allowed a sovereign and independent power to the Emperor. Besides, the political parties in opposition to them were congeries of factions rather than disciplined organisations. They were too young, too irresponsible, too inexperienced, for government; and they were equally remote, with the Elder Statesmen themselves, from the approving sentiment or the active support of a people incapable of an informed political opinion. The Elder Statesmen therefore presided over successive Cabinets, their serenity scarcely disturbed by the clamour of parties, their administration exhibiting few signs of deference to the opinion or criticism of the Representative House. But it seems that they never announced such an irrevocable interpretation of the Constitution as would have settled the constitutional executive in a perpetual independence of parties. Party men did not cease to intrigue for the displacement of the oligarchical administration of the Elder Statesmen by a combination representing the parties; and the Elder Statesmen, makers of the Constitution, governing independently of parties and therefore in apparent accordance with the letter of the Constitution, themselves appeared to countenance rather than to discourage the party men's hopes of ultimate government on a party basis.

In 1898 Marquis Ito, the chief of the Elder Statesmen, confronted by a coalition of the two lead-

ing parties, actually gave way to the party leaders, Counts Okuma and Itagaki, and thus admitted into constitutional practice a precedent of government by party which received and could receive no sanction under a strict adherence to the letter of the Constitution. It is true that this party administration survived long enough only to demonstrate the futility of the party men's assertions of the feasibility of the system under the prevailing conditions of incoherence, dissension, and faction among the parties. But the salient meaning of the incident was that the framers of the Constitution, by a positive act, had themselves sanctioned parties under a Constitution which, if it declared anything, declared against the party system and against parties as the ultimate repositories of administrative and legislative power.

The history of the Constitution since 1898 only unfolds the anomaly from the beginning inherent in the attitude of the framers of the Constitution towards that pseudo-charter of Japanese political rights. New combinations of the Elder Statesmen succeeded the abortive party administration of Counts Okuma and Itagaki. Then, in the autumn of 1900, Marquis Ito, the chief of the Elder Statesmen, himself organised a party. The anomaly was extraordinary. Before the inauguration of the Constitution he had been the practical head of the oligarchical body that undertook and achieved a complete reform of the State without a mandate from the nation and almost without a reference to the predilections of party politicians who, under the guise of a constitutional propaganda, often merely aimed at the power which they might expect from a constitutional *régime*. After the Constitution Marquis Ito, with his confrères, the other Elder Statesmen, had con-

tinued to preside over the administration because the Constitution, as he had framed it, required no recognition of parties by the Emperor, the sole repository of the sovereign power. Yet it was Marquis Ito who, in 1898, had given the leaders of a coalition of parties the opportunity of proving the party system in practice. His had been the dominant mind in a great movement of reform, the first condition of whose success was the despotic power of an oligarchy. Part of the programme of that movement of reform was the inauguration of a Constitution fulfilling the Emperor's oath to recognise public opinion as the eminent power of the State. Marquis Ito himself had drawn this Constitution. Its letter unmistakably affirmed the eminent and indeed inviolable sovereignty of the Emperor.<sup>1</sup> In conformity with that affirmation the Emperor, Marquis Ito, and the other Elder Statesmen had for eight years ignored the political parties. The oligarchy had then, in 1898, deferred to a coalition of parties, and upon the collapse of the coalition had resumed power on the former conditions of practical freedom from responsibility even to the criticism of the Representative House. And now, in 1900, Marquis Ito himself organised a party. It seemed that in his very motive he must confound confusion, for not only did he recruit his party mainly from the broken ranks of a party which for a score of years had proclaimed constitutionalism in the fullest sense as its master aim, but he announced in his first manifesto that his policy as a party leader would be to use his party in order to negative the movement towards the party system! 'The appointment and dismissal of Cabinet Ministers under the Constitution appertain,' the manifesto said,

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 66-68 of this volume.

‘to the prerogative of the Sovereign, who consequently retains absolute freedom to select his advisers from whatever quarter he deems proper, be it from among the members of political parties or from circles outside those parties. . . . Any failure to grasp this fundamental principle would be fatal to the proper and efficient management of affairs of State, and might lead to unseemly struggles for political power, thus engendering evils and abuses unspeakable.’ Marquis Ito’s unchallenged political pre-eminence at once secured him a large following, and in a few months—in October 1900—he became Prime Minister, for the fourth time as the country’s leading statesman, but for the first time as a party leader. Strange events followed—the issue of an anomalous situation. Marquis Ito found his government implacably opposed by the Upper House. Influenced by the oligarchical, anti-party sentiment which Marquis Ito had himself appeared to share and which, even as a party leader, he still appeared impliedly to endorse, the House of Peers rejected Marquis Ito’s finance measures, and in a month or two he resigned, his administration drawn down to doom between the Scylla of an Upper House opposed to party and the Charybdis of his own effort to rule through a party whose principal plank was opposition to the principle of party! A government of Junior Statesmen took office in the summer of 1901. It was a return to the oligarchical system, for a government containing no Elder Statesman could not but be dominated by the general body of them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was the government of Count Katsura. It was really appointed and took office as a stop-gap ministry, but in fact it proved a more than usually convenient medium, so to speak, for government by the Elder Statesmen, and was the longest-lived Cabinet since the inauguration of the Constitution. It went out shortly after the close of the war.

Down to the spring of 1903 the curious situation remained unchanged. Marquis Ito commanded a party majority in the House of Representatives. But he could not, or would not, take office because the Upper House, by virtue of his party leadership, held him renegade to anti-party principles, and held out no prospect of their approval of his measures. He continued, however, to be virtual Prime Minister. He controlled the largest party—a party with an absolute majority—in the House of Representatives, and he retained—what was far more important—his position of unchallengeable pre-eminence, actual and historical, in the State. His capacity and experience inevitably awarded him the first place as counsellor of the Emperor. The eminence of his historical achievement overshadowed every other reputation, compelling the Administration, with its own consent or otherwise, to defer to his extra-official advice before every considerable decision, at every important juncture.

In the spring of 1903 the polity of the Constitution—or at any rate the constitutional situation—was subject to a new adjustment consequent upon events originating primarily in Marquis Ito's anomalous position. The Cabinet of Count Katsura—dating from 1901, and itself a ministerial entity almost subsisting on Marquis Ito's approval—was opposed in certain finance measures by Marquis Ito's party, still in a majority in the House of Representatives. The Diet was dissolved, and Marquis Ito's party returned from the elections in undiminished strength. Count Katsura did not resign. He arranged a compromise with Marquis Ito, and Marquis Ito illustrated his extraordinary power by persuading the majority of his party to accept the compromise, though, in effect, it paid little deference to their voice and vote



as spoken or given in the preceding session of the Diet. Dissentients said he had sold his party, and a secession from it deprived it of its absolute majority power in the Lower House. The constitutional situation had become impossibly complicated, and shortly thereafter Marquis Ito resigned his party leadership to assume, with the two other leading Elder Statesmen, Counts Inouye and Matsukata, a position as member of the Privy Council close to the Emperor, but altogether outside the sphere of party politics. The Privy Council had been established by the Constitution in an advisory function *vis-à-vis* the Emperor. In practice it had not attained, and doubtless was not originally intended to attain, any position of executive importance. The accession of the leading Elder Statesmen, especially of Marquis Ito, under a direct rescript of the Emperor, introduced a new chapter not only in its history but in the history of the quasi-constitutional polity of which it is a part. Throughout recent momentous events the Elder Statesmen, formally as members of the Privy Council, but in reality as the only statesmen possible at a critical juncture, have originated or deliberated every important administrative act and presided at every extension or modification of policy.

The confusion of the position of the parties is doubly confused; the Diet is ignored by the formal Cabinet in nearly all responsible administrative practice;<sup>1</sup> the formal Cabinet is overshadowed by the informal body of Elder Statesmen, whose function the Emperor

<sup>1</sup> In November 1903—on the opening day of the session—the Government policy in the imbroglio with Russia was censured by unanimous vote of the House of Representatives. The Cabinet—though the Diet was but newly returned from an election following upon a premature dissolution—merely dissolved the Diet, and thus secured a free hand for itself, or more properly perhaps, for the Elder Statesmen, in carrying on the negotiations which in a few weeks ended in war.

has seemed to regularise by appointing its principal members to the Privy Council with a special injunction to assist him to carry on 'the work consequent on the restoration.'

For the time of the war, people and parties, Cabinet and Elder Statesmen, were as a unit for the attainment of a single, dominating, crucial purpose—success in the war. This attained, the anomalies of the polity of the Constitution—as revealed by the sifting process of events up to the eve of the war—must now be subject to an adjustment which may provide a harder test of Japanese capacities than the war itself.

Superficially the situation seems to resolve itself into a conflict of two interpretations of the intention of the Constitution—one contemplating party Cabinets and the other opposing them. But, in truth, the difficulties of the situation are much more intricate than this simple conflict.

The situation is complicated by peculiar factors of disturbance and confusion. It has been shown, for instance, that the Japanese leaders—the framers of the Constitution—have not been consistent in their attitude towards the Constitution. There has been a glaring blunder of practice or of interpretation. Either the Constitution is incapable of clear interpretation, or there has been a deviation in practice from its clear interpretation. At any rate, the growth of a saving reverence for the Constitution has suffered a serious blight. In the main, however, the existing situation results from the inevitable, or indeed necessary, domination of leaders over institutions—institutions which, in this case, are in a special sense the creation of the leaders—in the infancy of states. Amid the unceasing

and often kaleidoscopic mutations of the years since the proclamation of the Constitution, the Elder Statesmen have never for a moment abdicated the lofty throne of prestige, of influence, and of power to which they were raised—even against their own desire or their countrymen's wish—by their achievement. The infant polity which they had brought into being could not, even if it would, despise the tutelage of its parents. The stupendous enterprise of reform—the re-creation of the State—undertaken by the Japanese leaders, was bound, by the logic of its process, to find its consummation in an era which would dispense with the reformers in favour of their institutions. But this era is still in the future. How often in the politics of Western Europe is the truth demonstrated that no man is indispensable! Yet we forget that this happens in Western Europe only because institutions—the mind and the achievement of dead men—have become indispensable. In Japan the conditions are reversed. There men are indispensable because usage, tradition, history, have not yet sanctioned or sanctified institutions—the institutions of their creation. These men—the Japanese reform leaders—would be willing, they might be willing, to efface themselves. The logic of their great enterprise envisages their own effacement, were it feasible. It would be feasible were they able to register an act of oblivion—oblivion of their towering achievement. But, even in Japan, it is impossible to rearrange history.

Though it is clear that under no circumstances—that is to say, under no Constitution—could the Japanese leaders have reduced themselves to the position of mere servants of institutions of their own creation, it seems that they should have avoided dubiety in the letter of

their Constitution, or inconsistency in their practical interpretation of its intention. As it is impossible to doubt their sincerity and patriotism, the explanation of their failure should be sought in the difficulty of the conditions they were required to satisfy, the conditions they are still required to satisfy. Their master aim was, or should have been, to facilitate the transition from the epoch of their necessary domination as leaders over infant institutions to the era of the domination of adult institutions over the leaders who should come after them. But the path of this transition was and is strewn with a thousand thorny difficulties besides those that occur in the mere fact of the historical and traditional status of the reform leaders, a status that invests them for the time of their lives with the influence, the eminence, the political sanctity—in brief, with the status—of institutions.

It is usually said that Japanese political parties find their reason of being in persons—the persons of leaders. Persons, not principles, are, it is asserted, the common interest, the associate motive, of the banded politicians. It is said also that the instinct of this party motive is a survival from the habit of the feudal era when men—the Samurai or military class at any rate—adhered to their feudal lords and scarcely knew the idea or even the name of political principles. It is true indeed that before and after the Constitution there have been astounding reformations and readjustments of political parties in Japan, comprehensible only upon a premise of persons or personality as the paramount party motive. Parties which seem to assert agreement upon a given principle as their essential factor of coherence, dissolve and reform under new leaders or in new combinations without a pretence of continuity

of principle or of consistency of political objective. The units, it seems, merely gravitate towards new leaders, and, arrived at their destination, inquire what principles are mooted. An outstanding example is the inauguration of Marquis Ito's party in 1901, already referred to. He announced a paramount principle of opposition to government by party, yet he drew the majority of his recruits from the party of Count Itagaki, whose propaganda for a generation had been iteration of the propriety, if not of the necessity, of party government! Marquis Ito's personality counted for everything; that of Count Itagaki for little; continuity or consistency of principle counted for nothing, and Marquis Ito quickly secured a following which gave him an absolute party majority in the House of Representatives. It seems just, then, to define party motive in Japanese politics as appertaining to persons rather than to principles.

In truth, however, this is far from a sufficient explanation. At least the reference to feudal habit is insufficient. In a sense this explanation merely iterates the axiom that leaders count for more than institutions in the infancy of states, for institutions are the embodiment of principles.

Experience, wider than that of Japan, suggests a conclusion that a multiplicity of parties marks both the youth and the age of democratic polities. Lack of authoritative experience in any individual or group of individuals necessarily infers great diversity of opinion. Moreover, without experience, men are prone to conceive that sectional or even personal interest coincides with the interest of the State. Each person may then be said to conceive himself a party—or entitled to rank as such—and every individual

formulates a policy. A democratic polity with two great parties has attained its highest political efficiency, for then the people, or their representatives, the politicians, are proved to be divided mainly on a question of what is good or bad for the State; not upon a question or questions of what will best serve particular or sectional interests. A plethora of parties implies a multitude of special interests. Two great parties imply that the interest of the State is the prevailing question. In the youth of a democratic State there are many opinions of what is best. In its old age all the simple rules and obvious expedients of policy have been exploited, and men fall into a multitude of divisions on points of political philosophy. As political children men divide on first principles. As political dotards they split hairs. It is in their manhood that States, like men, perceive most clearly that there are only two questions of politics, as of morals—good and evil, right and wrong, the interest of the State and the interest of faction.

There is a multiplicity of parties in Japan because in the youth of a democratic polity there is great diversity of opinion as to policy, and because men are prone under the conditions of an infant democracy to see in their personal interest the interest of the State at large. This multiplicity of parties constitutes one of the great difficulties in the way of the successful operation of any Japanese Constitution. No clear or definite grouping of opinion on general lines has yet taken place, from which the interest of the State might emerge as the master aim of parties and the main pre-occupation of the thought and endeavour of their component units. As men admit no obligation to a political conscience,—because the standards that might educate a political

conscience have not yet appeared,—it is almost inevitable that where political education fails—where men, that is to say, are unable to discern good policy from bad, and thus to fix an abiding standard of opinion and political action—it is almost inevitable that there should be a collateral failure of political morals. Political intelligence and enlightenment are not indeed incompatible with political corruption, but political corruption is at least more easily explicable where there is so great a confusion of opinion about policy that men place no value upon consistency of opinion. The facility with which Japanese politicians acclaim new leaders and new principles has its counterpart in the ease with which many of them accept illicit reward for their facility. A few shining examples of integrity of conduct—integrity of conduct commonly associated with rigidity of political principle—only illustrate the dark foil of venality of which political character is mainly composed in Japan.

The political education of the mass of the people was an ulterior aim, not the first cause, of the inauguration of a constitutional *régime* in Japan, and, of necessity, the politics of the Constitution lack the steadying influence of an informed public opinion and a trained public conscience. The theory of individual political right is hardly apprehended in its full significance even by the small class of voters—less than a million in a population of 48,000,000—who return 376 members to the House of Representatives; and where the people are scarcely disposed to claim a ranking among the estates of the realm it is not likely that the power of their opinion will supply that motive for decisive and conscientious conviction which the politicians fail to discover in the tainted atmo-

sphere of faction which is the breath of their normal political life. Unused to the exercise, under the old polity, of political rights of any kind, the Japanese people labour under disadvantages peculiarly their own in the acquisition of a correct notion of their meaning and value. In the diverse and complicated prospect which the new era has opened to their eyes, political privilege, intangible and theoretical as it must appear to them, is certain for long to occupy a very subordinate place beside the solid advantages of new industrial, commercial, and educational opportunities. Their misfortune, in a sense, is to have had a new civilisation thrust upon them holus-bolus. It had undoubtedly been better to have administered it in doses.

The position of the Emperor in the regard of the Japanese people, while, as has elsewhere been shown, it preserves a national homogeneousness which, under a system of practically untrammelled administration by a highly enlightened oligarchy, provides extraordinarily efficacious conditions of progressive effort, yet conflicts with the educative tendency of constitutionalism, if it does not oppose it. At some point in its growth the idea of individual political rights must encounter a sacrosanct political sovereignty without possibility of an accommodation between the two. In the pre-modern era, it is true, the fiction of a divine Emperor co-existed with a reality of autocratic power wielded by the Shoguns, and the analogy might suggest that that is possible in Japan which has never been known in the world before—the co-existence of popular political enlightenment with a conception of ‘divine right’ exaggerated into the mystical proportions of a religious idea. It is with respect to the position of the Emperor, a divinity, opposite the contingency of a



popular mind educated to propound to itself a theory of popular rights, and afterwards habituated to claim and to exercise these rights—it is in the prospect of a collision of the former fact with the latter tendency,—irreconcilable as they seem to be,—that the hope of the future success of the constitutional polity is chiefly endangered. It is especially in the reconciliation of principles and ideas so essentially opposed as these that there arises a demand for original thought and original treatment by the Japanese leaders. Here, especially, is the sphere of Japan's 'political mission' to herself, a perplexing sphere of special phenomena unilluminated by the light of any experience or any experiment of Europe. The education of the people to accept the charge of the conscience of the State without the loss of those special qualifications for a great national career which are conserved by the popular conception of a divine Emperor,—this is the task of Japanese leaders who desiderate, with sincerity, a true constitutional era. No Constitution pretending to enfranchise the people may succeed without ultimately elevating popular conviction, formally expressed in the votes of the people, into the place and power of the conscience of the State. In a democratic polity parties are bound to fail in the higher patriotism—the patriotism which is enlightenment as well as emotion—if they do not act under a constant necessity of reference to popular conviction. This failure is conspicuous in Japan at the present time. It has even unsteadied the attitude of the oligarchical leaders towards their own Constitution, and, thereby placed the Constitution itself—depending for its success so much on its approximation to infallibility—in serious jeopardy.

The present situation is indeed largely explicable by

application of the simple deduction of experience that in the infancy of States leaders are more powerful than institutions, and the confusion in which the evolution of political institutions has been involved is no doubt largely explicable by the inconsistency of the attitude of the leaders towards the constitutional institutions destined to take their place ; but besides these factors of difficulty in the path of constitutionalism in Japan there are, without doubt, others, peculiar, one might almost say indigenous, to Japan. Among these, the Emperor, with a truly singular place and function in the State, looms large. The indifference or ignorance of the attitude of the mass of the people towards political rights ; their relative incapacity for individual thought and effort ; their repose—not unwarranted—upon the capacity of the existing administration of an oligarchy ; the prevalence of interested motive among the parties—resulting chiefly from the absence of political conviction among the people—these also are among the particular factors of confusion in what is, at the beginning, as at the end, a unique constitutional situation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There has been no important modification in the constitutional situation in Japan, as described and analysed in this chapter, during the period of the late war, or in the interval since its conclusion. The virtual management of the war by the oligarchy of Elder Statesmen was a blow to the constitutional idea in the sense that it exhibited the constitutional machine as at least a superfluity, and perhaps a hindrance, in a great national crisis. Count Katsura, the Premier during the war, was a political protégé of Marquis Ito. Marquis Saionji, his successor, is a political pupil of Marquis Ito. He assumed, after Marquis Ito, the leadership of that party a plank of whose platform—when it was formed by Marquis Ito—was, as stated in the text, non-party Government. The present ministry has the approval of the more numerous factions, or groups, in the Diet, but not the support of a party in a majority in the Lower House. Its advent solves none of the peculiar difficulties of the situation described in the text. The author's view of the ultimate fate of the Japanese attempt to harmonise constitutional practice and the constitutional idea with the existence of an imperial autocracy, which is also, in effect, a great religious idea, is set forth in a later chapter.

## XXV

### JAPAN AND CHRISTIANITY

JAPAN herself, through her leaders of thought and her statesmen, would relegate the religious question to a very subordinate place among Japanese problems of the future. The European onlooker, in his search for the true springs of national progress and power, is directed by his inherited 'consciousness of the immense importance of religion to take another view. Japan, in her present mood, indeed, begs to differ with us as to the relative importance of the elements of civilisation. Education she might place first; commerce is very important, and an efficient polity is exceedingly desirable. In her moments of reflection she will allow that religion has important claims, because history shows, or seems to show, that no State has risen to eminence without it. In her moments of speculative *abandon* she dreams that Japan will disprove this deduction from history. 'There is no knowing,' she says, 'what the future—Japan's future—may have to say on the subject.' The best European opinion of the order of the agents or symbols of civilisation is different. Undoubtedly we recline ultimately upon religion. This is the force we hold in reserve, it is our ultimate appeal, our final reference. Amid all the modern confusion of dogma we yet fall back upon the religious hope,

upon the hope of the future apparition of religion, transfigured to a new form and image of wholeness, more adorable than the old, which sometimes seems to have come utterly to grief in the storms of criticism. Fundamentally, in fact, our civilisation, our view of civilisation, is religious; even our politics, in their ultimate sanctions, are theocratic. In other words, the edifice of our civilisation rests upon a foundation of religion—and religion in the form of dogma; dogma whose imperative necessity and uncompromising rigidity we merely disguise under the more conventional name of religion.

It has already been shown<sup>1</sup> that Japan, so far from accepting dogma in this imperious character as a factor of civilisation or of civilised progress, fails, or has hitherto failed, even to conceive it as religion, or in relation thereto. It has always been absent from her Buddhism and her Shintoism; one does not find its symbols—persecution, devotion, bigotry, martyrdom—in Japanese history. When Christianity, after a record of phenomenal progress, was extirpated with fire and sword in the Japan of the early seventeenth century, it was not the malignity of opposing dogma that crushed it, but merely the State's apprehension of the political machinations of its alien servitors—Jesuits and Dominicans from Europe. The Japanese were easy converts to the gospel of the Portuguese and Spanish missionaries of Roman Christianity in those days. History shows that a feudal lord, having given ear to the persuasions of an earnest friar, would assemble his people and announce that they were to accept Christianity in a body at twelve o'clock on the morrow. It is to be feared that the Japanese were no less facile as apostates, for when the central government—the despotism of

<sup>1</sup> Chap. XIV.

Iyeyasu—affirmed the political necessity of banishing Christianity, only a short period sufficed to gain for Japan the dubious fame hitherto attaching solely to North Africa of a territory from which Christianity, once firmly planted, was successfully uprooted.<sup>1</sup>

Incapable of apprehending dogma, unaware of its enormous significance in the psychological development and in the present psychological basis of European civilisation, the thought and the statesmanship of Japan inevitably relegate the religious question to a subordinate place among Japanese problems. The psychic consciousness of the people having never known a dogmatic environment, or come in contact—enduring contact—with our, the European or Christian, conception—admitting no compromise, or treaty, or concession—of ‘saving truth,’ it is not at all surprising that the Japanese view should be so different, and to us so strange. Religion, it might seem, could never be an objective thought or idea to us, or at least to the Christian definition of it. To the Japanese it has never been anything but objective, save when and where a code of social and political conduct has been written under that faint adumbration of it, ancestor-worship. Of ‘saving truth,’ in the dogmatic religious sense, Japan has never had any but the dimmest vision. Her religions are religions of ‘saving works.’ Nirvana is not the gift of God; it is a conquest, a conquest of man by himself. Even the divinity of the Emperor is not so much an article of faith with the people as a sublime, inexplicable instance of fact.

<sup>1</sup> It is asserted, indeed, that the first emissaries of Christianity, entering Japan upon its re-opening to the world, found several small communities in Southern Japan preserving, with the relics of a distorted ritual and the remnants of a deformed creed, the memory of the Christian profession of their forefathers of the early seventeenth century (see Chamberlain's *Things Japanese*).

The Japanese position in this affair is thus profoundly interesting. In her own view unimportant, the religious question in Japan is, to the outside observer, the most remarkable crisis of the whole extraordinary drama of the country. The very fact of Japan's own indifference to it adds to the inherent interest of her attitude towards it. There is, it is true, a growing fashion of indifference, if not of opposition, to dogma in Western thought, but the truth is that when we are hard pressed we cannot be indifferent. With a superficial appearance of liberalism in our political attitude to creeds, it is certain that below the appearance there is a mind of bigotry which we call by the pleasanter names of conviction, truth, consistency, and steadfastness. What a gulf there is, after all, between our sects, from each conceiving itself the sole repository of sacred truth! It thus becomes possible for a Newman, embracing the Roman confession, and the friends he had left behind him in the Anglican, to feel that an appalling chasm had opened where but yesterday there were the dearest bonds of fellowship.<sup>1</sup> In the Japanese view this tragedy would almost be a kind of absurdity. Professing Christians, in very high places in the Japan of to-day, join in the elaborate ceremonies of the Japanese Court when, on the Emperor's birthday, the spirits of the Imperial ancestors are invoked. From the Japanese standpoint it seems that they may do so with sincerity and without conscious outrage to their Christian profession, for every inference suggests that the latter does not in their minds envisage uncompromising dogma. This mind can never discover anywhere that precious deposit of truth which, in the very nature of the case, can neither be added to nor taken away from, aug-

<sup>1</sup> See the *Apologia pro vita sua*.

mented nor diminished. The greatest obstacle to the progress of their propaganda encountered by Christian missionaries in Japan is the ease with which their converts, or professing converts, fall away from their profession. There are notorious cases of men who have climbed to high places by the aid of the ladder of education which the Christian missionary, in his well-meaning zeal, has provided for the promising convert who jettisons his faith when he has captured the prize of high employment and large emoluments. Yet it is doubtful if these men should be branded with the hideous name of apostates. Did they not, from the first, fail in the Christian missionary's conception of dogma, or saving truth? And is not this failure a kind of congenital defect of the Japanese soul, which has never perceived or absorbed the meaning of dogma; never in the long evolution of its distinctive perceptions and characteristic faculties breathed the psychic atmosphere of irrevocable, tyrannical, uncompromising creeds?

Disallowing this quality of irrevocableness in religious interpretations—their own or other people's—failing, it might be said, in the fundamental sense of religion, as hitherto conceived and apprehended in the West, the Japanese inevitably tend to view religion as an adjunct to life rather than as a necessary explanation of it, or as an expression of its moral worth. Educated Japan at best regards religion—all religion or any—mainly in the light of a system of metaphysics or philosophy; traditional Japan—that is, the mass of the Japanese people—accepts it as an exterior or incidental fact of life, to which an occasional deference is due, even as deference is due to the bodily sensations and the social obligations. Neither view sees it as a great unifying principle, in

the absence of which life—sensation and the social obligations—ceases to have any meaning or sanction. It may be allowed the status of an objective reality, but even so it does not, in the Japanese estimation of it, possess a subjective importance greater than can be claimed by any other fact or phenomenon of human consciousness.

There is thus a profound difference, denoting in truth a radical opposition, in the Japanese and the Western—or, as it should perhaps be said, the Christian—positions, in presence of religion as a fact, as a phase of experience, or as a teleological system.

The recent history of Christian proselytising effort in Japan clearly exhibits the Japanese, in their attitude towards Christianity, as objective critics—favourable, or the reverse, as the case may be, but always objective—rather than as a nation of individuals poignantly anxious for admission to a knowledge of ‘saving truth.’ The Japanese attitude was prominently and unmistakably illustrated in the resolution adopted in May 1904 by ‘a great religious meeting, called by influential men’—the description of an English correspondent—held in Tokyo, ‘the object of which was to determine on founding in Japan a church, pro-Christian in character, but independent in its lines.’ ‘Leading men,’ the same description proceeded, reflecting, doubtless, the prevailing feeling of the ‘great religious meeting,’ ‘think that the time has come, in view of the education question and the issues at stake, to adopt the elements approved of by the majority of civilised nations. An edict establishing a Church of Japan is not improbable.’ It is obvious that we are not here in presence of what in the West would be called a genuine spiritual or religious impulse towards Christianity, but of an objective perception of



its beneficial uses as an educative or ethical canon, as, in fact, 'one of the elements approved of by the majority of civilised nations.'

The constant presence of a motive, ultimately political, in the country's attitude towards religion is the key to the extraordinarily chequered career of Christianity in Japan. It seems also that, in the historical absence of the sense or need of dogma, the domination of this motive may be a determining influence in the future, not only of Christianity, but of all religion, in Japan.

At the present time the official attitude is one of absolute impartiality towards all religious professions. This attitude dates from the early years of the modern *régime*. The principle of religious toleration was bound to come within the purview of the reform leaders as essentially of the spirit of their great undertaking, if not as absolutely necessary to its lasting success. For a few years, indeed, the prejudice against Christianity, which had survived in the country throughout its two centuries and a half of seclusion from the world—a prejudice born of a real apprehension of the political machinations of the emissaries of Christianity in the early seventeenth century, and finding expression in its expulsion or extirpation—this prejudice still for a time influenced the political attitude of the *régime* of the new era. Buddhism itself, to which in some sense the nation had given its heart, as a cult of foreign origin suffered an eclipse in the eager assertion of nationalism that accompanied if it did not even inspire the modern era. Buddhism was disestablished, Christianity was warned off, by the State in the heat of its new passion for its ancient love—the purely indigenous Shintoism that affirmed and still affirms a quasi-dogma of the Emperor's divinity. But as

an increasing stream of light poured upon the country's intelligence from the sun of Western civilisation the nation perceived that Christianity was a factor of immense significance in the economy of that civilisation. Then, in the decade from 1878 to 1888 a wave of pro-Christian sentiment—interested sentiment, as any impartial judge must pronounce it—seemed to promise the ultimate prostration of the country at the feet of the Founder of Christianity. 'Several years ago,' said a friendly critic in the Japanese periodical press in 1897—'several years ago, when the "Occident craze" was at its height, the Christian Church was made the pet of the day. Japanese converts exchanged love and courtesy with foreign missionaries as brothers and sisters, and willingly co-operated with them in all the undertakings of the Church. Churches were erected, halls were built, periodicals were started, schools were opened—all with money coming from Christendom. But [this account proceeds] when the craze subsided, and people began to think that patriotism was another name for assuming a strong attitude towards foreigners, those who had been the first to join hands with foreigners were the first to criticise and attack the doings of foreign missionaries.' The pro-Christian wave receded. The motive that brought it into existence was ultimately political, for it viewed Christianity chiefly as a desirable medium of progress in Western civilisation. The motive upon which the wave recoiled was also political, for it saw, or imagined, in Christianity an influence destructive of Japanese patriotism. And from the beginning—since the time of the Daimyo of the early seventeenth century who had their retainers 'converted' to Christianity almost in battalions—the sense of the need of dogma, or 'saving truth,' which is ever

postulated by Christianity, had no root and no growth in the Japanese mind.

In 1889 the Constitution granted freedom of religious belief, and statutory affirmation was then made of the official attitude which, indeed, had never been otherwise than impartial since the early seventies. In truth the official attitude has proved of little importance to Christianity. At any rate its proselytising progress, since the ebb of the pro-Christian wave in 1888 and the Constitution's promulgation of the principle of religious toleration in 1889, has been so inconspicuous as to be almost negligible. Out of a population of 48,000,000 all the Christian sects number a total congregation of but 140,000 or 150,000, and the profession of a proportion of these might scarcely pass any adequate test of its basis of 'conviction.'

The appearance of Christianity could hardly fail to stimulate Japanese Buddhism. The standards of conduct among the Christian missionary body have forced upon the priests of the Buddhist hierarchy the humiliating rôle of apologists for the notoriously corrupt habits of their chiefs, the while they have been compelled, by the informed and scientific criticism of educated Japan and the pure and definite ideals of Christianity, to make a show of attempting the rescue of the ethics and the metaphysics of their creed from the deeps of superstition and empiricism in which they are plunged. Shintoism, scarcely a system of ethics, still less a creed, can summon no inherent energy of initiative, and in the midst of the upheavals of the time has relied, as it must rely, for its maintenance and conservation on its intimate connection with the Japanese cult of loyalty which finds its visible symbols in that practice of ancestor-worship and that assertion of imperial sacro-

sanctity which both originally emanate from Shintoism, and are accepted by Japan to-day almost in the character of dogmas. But in fact the vogue of Buddhism and Shintoism, which gives no sign of abatement or diminution among the mass of the nation, rests upon an authority or foundation which Christianity, represented by standards of conduct ever so high in its emissaries, and by whatsoever purity and certainty of dogma or ideal, can hardly hope, as it seems, to assail and capture for its own uses. Japan has never known religion in that character of dogma in which Christianity has always hitherto sought to commend itself, and in an age in which the dogmatic authority of Christianity is being seriously challenged in its own peculiar territories in Western Europe, it does not seem probable that it can succeed in educating Japan in the perception of itself, or of religion generally, in this character. Religion to the Japanese has always been a fact extraneous, as it were, to human consciousness. Christianity proffers itself as nothing less than a reformed human consciousness, a subliminal transformation, proposing not a new point of view, but a new being. In this character and shape religion is virtually unknown to the Japanese, who thus are not prepared to appreciate the seriousness of the Christian view of 'saving truth.'

From the Japanese people Buddhism has never asked more than, if so much as, a subjective approval of certain objective truths or conceptions of truth, and as it subserves, or seems to subserve, the maintenance of these truths by all the paraphernalia of ritual and many of the symbols of ecclesiasticism, the objective concept of religion has passed into the habit of the Japanese popular mind. This mind therefore clings to Buddhism

or to Shintoism, not because either satisfies a profound longing for spiritual sustenance, but rather because Christianity lacks the sanctions of usage, custom, and tradition which recommend Buddhism or Shintoism to minds unaccustomed to the Christian view of religion as 'the one thing needful.' In a sense, Buddhism in modern Japan both fails and succeeds because it has never aimed at the position of Christianity as the fountain of a body of absolute dogmatic truth. It fails to dominate the life of the Japanese people because it has never established itself on a foundation of true dogma. It succeeds against the assault of Christianity because, without true dogma of its own, it has not educated the Japanese mind to hope for dogma. Its complaisance is its ruin in the face of scientific criticism ; it is its success against dogma. It succeeds because it is inert and passive ; it fails because it does not attempt to reach the foundations of life and thought by proposing an absolute explanation of phenomena, physical and psychical.

Christianity offers dogma, and postulates the existence of 'saving truth' as a fact. Meanwhile, however, the Japanese mind has not been educated by Buddhism or Shintoism to appreciate the need of dogma—absolute dogma—and modern criticism has arisen to challenge the general postulate of 'saving truth,' and the particular postulate of Christianity's pre-eminent claim to its possession. Rationalism has, in fact, captured the educated intellect of Japan. The people cannot distinguish between Christianity and Buddhism because they do not know 'saving truth,' or dogma, as a postulate or a fact. They are therefore content with Buddhism because it has the sanctions of usage, custom, and tradition that Christianity lacks. The educated

intellect of the country, even if it perceives the possibility of 'saving truth' or absolute dogma—which is doubtful—knows the force of the objections that modern criticism urges against Christianity's claim to be the repository of this 'saving truth' or absolute dogma. On the one hand, scientific criticism has seriously assailed the prescriptive claim of Christianity to the pre-eminent dogmatic position which it postulates for itself; on the other hand, the Japanese have never identified religion with absolute dogma or 'saving truth.' The educated mind of Japan thus leans to rationalism, while the popular mind reposes upon conventional Buddhism, Shintoism, or ancestor-worship.

There are those who take a middle position, which, however, from the point of view of dogmatic Christianity, is a position almost as lamentable as that of the educated rationalist or the half-superstitious Buddhist. They are those Japanese who affirm, in the words of a Japanese publicist, that 'Christianity, of whatsoever description, will first have to become "Japanised" before Japan can be Christianised.' Preposterous as it may seem, preposterous as it is bound to seem, to the propagandist of dogmatic Christianity—the Christianity which, stripped of definitions and developments, is to its believers a precious deposit of saving truth not to be augmented or diminished—preposterous as it must seem, it is true, in the words of the same publicist, that 'the trend of thought among Japanese Christians seems to indicate in an unmistakable manner that the interpretation of the Gospels is destined to undergo essential modification at the hands of Japanese converts.' The idea, the mode of expression, betray that hiatus in the Japanese attitude towards religion which is represented in the Western mind by a fundamental con-

sciousness of the need of dogma or 'saving truth,' final, irrevocable, immutable, unchallengeable. The Japanese attitude is ultimately political, for the 'Japanisation' of Christianity contemplates 'a form of religion which shall be in harmony with the national spirit of the people.' The Western attitude is one of faith, which, in fact, is conceived as the essence of religion.

The general situation in Japan, while thus somewhat chaotic and incongruous, nevertheless, at its point of nearest contact with the Western dogmatic position, exhibits a surprising identity with the phenomena of thought, or, as it might more accurately be said, of thought-disturbance, at the heart of that dogmatic position at the present time. The identity does not occur as the result of identical causes. In Western Europe and the United States there is a profound religious disturbance which already gives birth to an idea almost identical with the proposal of a 'Japanised' Christianity. For does not the thought-disturbance in the bosom of the Christian Churches of to-day tend to formulate itself in a protest against the immobility of creeds? And what does this protest express if not a movement first towards a rationalised dogma and afterwards towards nationalised creeds, reason having a quality of nationality no less than temperament? And what is a 'Japanised' Christianity if not a nationalised creed or rationalised dogma? In the one case modern criticism has forced the thought of Western Europe—the Protestant thought at any rate—to urge or even to claim the enfranchisement of belief from the despotism or dogmatism of immobile creeds. In the case of Japan national feeling, the historical national consciousness, the genius of the people, claims the right to adjust a creed to its particular habit or

peculiar need. In both cases, though not from identical causes, it is the immobility of creeds or dogma that is assailed. In the one case, that of Japan, the protest carries on the psychical history or development of the people, for they have never known true dogma. In the other case, that of Western thought, the protest is almost of the nature of an apostasy, for is not the history or development of that thought inextricably bound up with dogma and the sense of dogma? In truth, if the 'Japanisation' of Christianity is to be pronounced preposterous, the reconstruction or revision of creeds is not less but even more so.

In the absence from the Japanese mind of a historical sense of dogma, the Christian presentation of it in an imperious and immobile shape might scarcely strike a sympathetic chord in the educated mind of the country. That mind, upon release from the trammels of the half-superstitious Buddhism of the country, could only, in fact, fall back upon materialistic or rationalistic explanations. The materialistic habit of the educated Japanese mind is, in truth, its prominent characteristic. Supernatural concepts do not present themselves with a poignant or clamorous appeal; the Japanese mind, educated or ignorant, does not agitate itself, or scrutinise phenomena, in a feverish search for metaphysical realities, in the form of dogmatic truths, which will allay the thirst of the soul for a clear illumination of the mysterious darkness surrounding human destiny. For the Western mind Christian dogma has hitherto provided this illumination. It has also created the need of it—for the mind, like the body, grows upon that on which it feeds—and upon the failure of this illumination the Western mind collapses in a despair which the Japanese mind does not understand, because



dogma has never accustomed it to hope for or to rely upon dogmatic light for guidance amid the darkness.

The materialistic habit of mind, when or if it admit religion as a necessity, assumes in regard to it a political attitude. The cry for a 'Japanised' Christianity, in which even professing Japanese Christians join, is in effect both a material and a political claim, much as the protest against the immobility of creeds in the bosom of Western Protestantism is rationalistic and national or political. Had dogmatic Christianity continued to be the unshaken fortress that it was in the centuries preceding the nineteenth, it must have adjudged the claim for a 'Japanised' Christianity to be the preposterous pretension of an infantile religious intelligence. In its present position, with the foundations of its former dogmatic impregnability apparently giving way, it deceives itself if it fail to admit that the preposterous of a past era may be the proper, the reasonable, nay, almost the necessary of to-day.

The comparative failure of the appeal of Christianity in Japan is, in fact, not so much a failure of Christianity as a failure of the appeal of dogma. The Japanese view of the causes of this failure usually supports that interpretation without precisely affirming it. 'Rightly or wrongly,' says a competent Japanese journal in a writing of 1897, 'the strong current of nationalism is certainly not calculated to promote the cause of Christian propaganda. . . . Another circumstance that mars the prospect of Christianity in this country is the influence which the materialistic philosophy of Confucius has exercised over the minds of the educated class under the Tokugawa régime [immediately preceding the modern era]. The

Confucian philosophy is materialistic not in the sense of [in its affirmation of] vulgar or selfish principles, but in the sense of its being opposed to the supernatural. . . . The peculiar sense of incongruity awakened in the unsophisticated Japanese mind by the doctrines of Christianity, such as original sin, the divinity of Christ, atonement for sin by Him, and so on, cannot, we believe, be imagined by those born in a Christian country. . . . This intellectual feature of the educated Japanese is not a mere passing phenomenon ; it represents the results of centuries of thinking and education. A third element which darkens the future of Christianity in Japan is the advent of modern science in its most advanced form. . . . The days are long since gone by when, in this country, the works of John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer were sought after, not because of their philosophical value, but because of the hostility of these authors to Christianity. . . . They are fatal equally to the Shinto and Buddhist cults. The superstitions contained in the Shinto and Buddhist faith are no more accepted by the educated Japanese than those found in the Bible. It is a bold assertion to state that Japan will never become a Christian country . . . but we are led to believe that the balance of probability is in favour of such a prediction.'

The methods of Christian missionaries in Japan are sometimes accused as if these were the principal or perhaps the only obstacle to the progress of the Christian propaganda in the country. Yet though some of these shafts of criticism may light upon real flaws and defects, the failure of Christianity to achieve any substantial success in Japan must be referred to remoter and more general causes than the temporary or accidental discrepancies that may appear in the contrast of the pro-

fession and the method of the ordained representatives of Christianity. The ultimate cause is one which, being found, must explain not only the comparative failure of the Christian propaganda, but such phenomena as the continued adherence of the vast mass of the people to a semi-superstitious Buddhism and Shintoism proposing no such certain and despotic system of dogma as is proffered by Christianity; the claim, subscribed even by many among the professedly Christian community of Japan, to adjust Christianity to the 'national spirit' of Japan; the domination of the political motive in the attitude of educated Japanese disposed to accept the proposition of religion as a national necessity; the adoption by the larger proportion of the educated class of a position in scientific rationalism from which they view the dogmatic details of all supernatural or quasi-supernatural creeds as valuable only in so far as they prescribe an ethical practice approved by reason and conscience; and, above all, perhaps, this ultimate cause must explain the instinctively materialist outlook of the Japanese mind disclosed in all these and other phenomena of its attitude towards religion and the mysteries that religion offers to illumine. To the present writer it seems that this ultimate cause is to be found in the absence of dogma in the very day of the opening of Japan's relations with and explanations of the supernatural. This absence of dogma has, as its logical consequence, the failure of the dogmatic sense,—if this name may be given to that indefinable yet, in its way, inexorable impulse which directs the mind whose evolution has been linked with the history of Christianity to postpone all rest and repose until its longing is satisfied for the certainties that, until scientific analysis and synthesis shall have explained the cosmos, can of

necessity be found only in religion and the subliminal assumptions of faith.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The absence from the Japanese mind—in its historical evolution and in its modern attitude—of that which I have called the ‘dogmatic sense,’ or the sense of the absolute in religion—the starting-point, or first postulate, of Christianity if not of all true religion—is clearly indicated in the following excerpt from an address on ‘Christianity and Modern Japanese Thought,’ given in Tokyo two years ago by a Japanese convert to Christianity. It is evident that the speaker himself had grasped and adopted the concept of the ‘absolute in religion,’ but his statements show that this idea is wholly foreign to Japanese thought. The concluding portion of his address was devoted to a statement as to ‘the form of [Christian] truth most easily assimilated by present-day [Japanese] thinkers.’ This form of truth, he said, ‘is the moral and social side of Christianity’—not the dogmatic. He proceeded to describe the difficulties in the path of dogma in Japan—though he did not state and possibly did not perceive them quite in this character.

‘They will readily understand,’ said the speaker, referring to his countrymen, ‘if you say that God is Creator, or that Heaven is order; but a God with personality is an idea hard for them to grasp. Even among Christians [Japanese] of the present time the number who have really comprehended this personal God is comparatively small.

‘A ready understanding will be met with if Christ is said to be a man of perfection or perfect righteousness, or the like. But the divine nature of Christ they do not readily accept.

‘If the Holy Spirit is spoken of as an influence, or as the power of God, they will understand. Buntensho of So (in China) and our own Fujita Toko taught the “immanence of a holy influence throughout space,” and Mencius [the greatest Chinese philosopher after Confucius] a “prevalent spirit.” For this reason they represent it [the Holy Spirit] to themselves in some such way, I suppose. But here again in grasping the existence of personality they have difficulty.

‘The weakness of mankind they well know. To make them take the next step, to grasp the sinfulness of sin, is the great problem. The conviction of a personal God and a sinful self is the key to unlock the ultimate secret of Christianity. Until this is really grasped the other problems are unintelligible.

‘The way of salvation is another point for my fellow-countrymen to grasp in its true meaning. As they are endowed with ethical ideas, the “government theory” and “vicarious sacrifice” do not find ready acceptance, while Christ’s self-sacrificial spirit is heartily welcomed.

‘But whatever the way, to make these fundamental truths clear to the present generation is a great and agonising labour.’

## XXVI

### PROGRESS AND INDIVIDUALISM

FROM the plethora and complexity of problems confronting the mind proposing to survey the present position and aspect of civilisation in the States of Western Europe, two insistent issues tend to emerge—one, that of the nature or basis of the individual's relation to the State, considered as the mass of individuals, the other that of the reality (and, if this be granted, the 'direction' and goal) of civilisation, or progress, as a process. The one issue is a very old one ; the other is very new. The individual has been concerned with the importance of himself since the world began. It is not very long, comparatively, since he began to suspect the importance, or to be doubtful of the course, of the general destiny.

A conception of progress, as a definite process, is a characteristic feature of the civilisation of Europe. The mind of that civilisation has been accustomed to conceive of progress as a cumulative, orderly process, an organisation of forces conducting history towards a goal, guiding it to an expected consummation. This concept of a progressive process continues, indeed, to furnish the European mind with an important bulwark against intellectual chaos. To-day it is still a potent lever in the hands of statesmen and politicians. It is still beloved as a shibboleth by political theorists. It is still

accepted as an explanation, if not as a justification, of history by political philosophers. To some it may—nay, it must—appear that the loss of this idea should be a disaster, its resignation almost an impossibility. To the eyes of political ardour and enthusiasm it might well seem that, robbed of the interest of this idea, politics should cease to have either a meaning or a justification.

In Europe, nevertheless, doubts begin to arise as to the reality of a process of progress. The exhaustion of great principles, on which the reality of the process has been deemed to hinge—an exhaustion manifest, to a greater or less degree, in all the great polities of the West—engenders doubt as to the very existence of the process. And the prospect of the loss of an idea on which so much of the effort—so much indeed of the very solidity and order—of European States has depended, is a factor of disturbance in European politics serious in proportion to our past assurance of, and our present dependence upon, its reality.

It will be allowed that the wreck of the idea—the doctrine, as it may almost be called—of progress, conceived as an authentic process in history, must be of the most serious import in the modification of European political conditions. The destruction of this political dogma by criticism or by experience could hardly fail to unsettle—its partial destruction having indeed already unsettled—European political conditions, somewhat in the measure of the unsettlement wrought in European religious conditions by the disturbance of religious dogma.

In Japan the prospect is different. In the psychological outlook of the Japanese, progress—that pillar of fire which has conducted the great peoples of Europe over so many wastes of history—scarcely appears as a

phantom of the fiery reality which has been the object of the adoration of a hundred years of European enthusiasm. In place of the worship of the dogma of progress there is a necessity imposed upon State and people of achieving the status, material and intellectual, of Europe—in other words, of absorbing whatever to their choice seems good, of the characteristic modes and institutions of that civilisation of Europe which may or may not be viewed as the ‘result’ of a definite progressive process. The Japanese do not lean upon progress as an idea ; they expect its results, if it be a reality, as a purchase, almost as an importation, from Europe ; and their leaders, conscious of a necessary conflict between European ideas and Japanese, conceive a policy of adjustment or compromise as the soul of their politics rather than the more alluring idea of a march towards a glittering consummation of history.

So far then, the stability and order of the Japanese State may be said to be better assured in the immediate future than the stability and order of the leading States of Europe, in respect that the Japanese State is more secure from the disturbance to be anticipated from the possible loss of the idea of progress. For the Japanese hardly know an idea which has been as a lode-star to the anxious eyes of the foremost European peoples. To the latter the final wreck of the idea of progress may be a stunning disaster. The Japanese, with their instinct for compromise, and their relative indifference to profound interpretations of life and of history, may be ready, as probably they are ready, to adopt, in place of the doctrine of progress, a theory of adjustment to conditions as these change with the changing years. Their modern era has mainly been a rapid adjustment to new conditions, such as in itself almost belies the idea

of a gradual and cumulative process of progress, and their view of the future is coloured rather by an ambition to multiply knowledge than by a desire to illustrate a process of history. They believe—their leaders believe—greatly in the possibilities of the science and knowledge of the West, and but little in its moral superiority and its greater happiness. And a process of progress which neither improves morals nor increases happiness is not a reality but a phantom.

If the position of Japan with regard to the first great issue that emerges on a scrutiny of the complexity of modern conditions—that of the reality of a process of progress comprehending and directing the general destiny—be different from that of European States, a distinction as salient occurs in the relative situation of Japan and of the States of Europe with regard to the second great issue of modern conditions—the present and future basis of the individual's relation to the State, viewed as the mass of individuals.

The major concern of all Governments—after the conception and the conduct of a policy comprehending the general destiny of their peoples, and identifiable or not, as the case may be, with a process of progress—is the adjustment of the interest of the individual, so far as this is possible, to the interest of the mass of individuals. The difficulty of this adjustment—the impossibility, indeed, of its final or complete achievement—is the ever-recurring pre-occupation of States concerned to maintain their domestic peace.

In Western Europe and in the United States, where, under the inspiration of ideas born at the Reformation, individualism has for long been the determining principle in domestic policy and legislation, the time is come when the pressing concern of Governments—prompted



by the instinct of self-preservation, if by no higher motive—is seen to be the restraint of the excessive application of the principle of individualism. For it is necessary at least to attempt to appease the discontent of the mass of individuals who are inevitably the social and economic victims of the success of the individual happily constituted, or happily circumstanced, for advantaging himself of the large social and economic opportunities open to him through the recognition of the right of the individual as the determining idea in the governance of States.

In the States of Europe, and in the United States, the infinite complexity and, at some points, the peculiar delicacy of the vast economic and industrial fabric, raised on the foundation of the idea of the economic, industrial, and political freedom of the individual, almost forbids the hope of the achievement of a re-adjustment of the basis of the individual's relation to the State without great difficulty, if not disaster. Into so many adventures and enterprises of science, of intellect, and of material achievement—resulting in the creation of a marvellously intricate fabric of civilisation—has the impetus of the individualistic principle led Western States, that a retracing of their steps in the direction of a denial of the paramountcy of the idea of individual right seems all but impossible. Yet it is certain that both the mind and the heart of the West begin to be troubled by the clear necessity of a new adjustment. By the demand of organised Socialism and social democracy; by the religious conscience appalled by the lurid contrast between actual conditions and those which a general obedience to the canons of a pure Christianity should seem able to conjure; by the State's instinct of self-preservation—by

the necessities of the case, by the promptings of conscience, by the demands of policy, by the voice of science (never satisfied to contemplate with indifference the degeneracy of political or other types), the States of Europe which have prescribed to Japan the civilised ways she shall follow, are being impelled towards a re-conception, or towards a re-interpretation, of one of the primary articles, if not the primary article, of the code of their civilised practice. And this in the face of an economic situation bewildering in its complexity, hazardous in its delicacy.

In this great 'issue' of conditions in modern politics, we start, in Japan, from different premises, though in truth the ultimate prospect may be the same.

It can hardly be disputed that individualism—political, economic, social—has been flattered and encouraged in Western Europe by religious ideas, born, some of them, in the era of the Reformation, others of them inherent in the basic structure of Christianity, and authorised by the necessities of its development. In Japan—in the absence of Christianity—the rights of individualism have neither been encouraged, assisted, nor regulated by these religious ideas, and very different conditions therefore, for the time being, govern the relations of the individual to the State.

To the present writer it seems hardly disputable that the master factor in the evolution, or growth, of individualism in modern Europe has been the prevailing concept of God and of the individual's relation to God under the doctrines of Christianity, as modified by the great re-interpretation of the Reformation.

As one views present-day conditions, it seems that the effect of the Christian dogma of God, universal

and omnipotent, and of the individual's direct and intimate responsibility to Him, has outrun or outlasted that of all other Christian dogmas and ideas relating to the conduct of the individual as a member of the great human community. The Founder of Christianity, after a life of unsurpassed and unsurpassable altruism, bequeathed, or is deemed to have bequeathed, a body of ethical doctrine which, in the evolution of the societies that accepted it as moral law, has in the end operated with an effect pronouncedly egoistic. A primary doctrine of the necessity of faith with a secondary, and, indeed, under the Protestant or Reformation interpretation of Christ's message, almost negligible advice of the importance of 'works,' has, in effect, sanctioned, or seemed to sanction, the almost complete elimination from the scheme of 'works,' or the ethical principle they represent. Man was asked to recognise first the importance—the omnipotence and universality—of God, and then of himself,—the priceless value of his immortal soul, and the supremacy of the question of its eternal welfare. And in the end a concept of individuality has emerged which has tended to exclude the idea of obligation to the mass of individuals, although this obligation was, in fact, more emphatically declared by the Founder of Christianity than the obligation of the individual towards himself and God.

Japanese conditions have been different. In the Japan of pre-modern times dogma—especially a dogma of God—being absent, opposed no barrier to the absolute tyranny of individuals; and in fact the extraordinary opportunity so offered to masterful individuals was the prize of all the turbulence and contention that filled successive eras of Japanese history, until an

individual came who had statesmanship to consolidate on a basis of principle the power his right arm had gained by the exercise of force. There being no dominant, pervading dogma of God in Japan, representing, as it did in Europe, a tribunal of reference higher than any human authority, men themselves, in the persons of forceful individuals, ultimately occupied the place and function of dogma. The Mikado has been a divinity in Japan from the earliest times, but he could never have achieved or retained this apotheosis against the opposition of a firmly rooted dogma of God. The temporal power of the Mikado was usurped by the Shoguns; his divinity was never openly challenged. There being no dogmatic God, usage—and perhaps the inherent need of humanity—ultimately imparted a character of dogma to the Mikado's divinity, and in this character it tends to survive to-day. The human Mikados became gods because there was no God, visualised in dogma, present or immanent in the consciousness of the people. The Shoguns acquired absolute temporal rule because a human dogma—a dogma of human divinity—cannot but go down before a masterful man, incarnating that spirit of individualism of which the divinity of the Mikados was itself an assertion. Had Japan known and accepted the Christian dogma of God neither Mikado nor Shogun would ultimately have been possible, and it was perhaps nothing but the instinctive fear of an ultimate menace to their own political position from the Christian dogma of God that prompted the Shoguns to stamp out Christianity in the Japan of the early seventeenth century, and to close the country to its attempts.

It seems that individualism had in Japan an opportunity that in Europe, after the rise of Christianity,

never presented itself in the same splendid aspect and proportions to the eyes of masterful genius. At the same time—and here is that quality of antinomy or contradiction, the ‘demonic principle’ of the ancients, which seems to be an inevitable phase of the universal ‘soul’ of history, if not, indeed, the soul itself of history—individualism was in process of being crushed in Japan the while its power of assertion was growing in Europe. In Japan, men constituted a political absolutism which in the eyes of the people, who had no appeal to make to the tribunal or to the sanctions of God (realised for them in definite concepts of dogma), acquired the aspect, as it claimed the functions, of an authority as nearly as possible providential. Nowhere did political power—the rule of the Government of the time—achieve the wide, penetrating, paternal, or even, as it is proper to say, providential status which it attained in Japan. Government, in the inevitable form of a personal despotism, usurped, as far as it might, the place and function of Providence. It created a rigid caste system ; it presumed to control economic laws ; it enforced sumptuary regulations often quixotically searching in their incidence ; it prescribed canons of political conduct ; it even catalogued institutes of morality. In other words, it left hardly any sphere or margin of conduct, laws, morals, ethics, to the regimen of a canon derived from a dogma of God. The antinomy of the situation appears in the inevitable sequence of a people incapable of individualism because their failure to conceive or to receive the dogma of a universal God enabled an individual to achieve the place and exercise the function over them of a providential despotism. Potentially a nation of individuals, the Japanese, from the fact that individuals

were able to seize the extraordinary opportunity open to individualism, became a nation which seemed almost to have lost the capacity for individual effort.<sup>1</sup> There is an appearance of corollary in the process of the facts ; yet the inconsistency of history is affirmed by the fact that a people free from the restraint of dogma, and therefore apparently capable of extraordinary originality, became the slaves of an artificial formalism more narrow, more strict, and more rigid than any code of manners and morals cast from the mould of dogma in the hard shape in which we know it in Western Europe. Individuality disappeared in Japan ; the hand of formalism—or realised despotism—lay heavy on manners, politics, and morals. This was the Japan of the pre-modern era, the Japan upon which the light of the individualistic self-assertive civilisation of Europe—itself beginning under an augury of ultimate dogmatic formalism which never threatened Japan—began to shine with an ever-increasing radiance in the fifties and sixties of last century.

In Europe the situation resulting from the unre-

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the author may appear in this volume to have laboured unduly the repressive effect of the feudal despotism of Japan—that of the Tokugawa Shoguns—which gave place to the modern Japanese political State under the circumstances related in the earlier chapters of the book. To show that he has not exaggerated its despotic character, he may quote two authorities—the one Japanese, the other foreign. A Japanese writer (Mr. Nosè), as quoted by Mr. W. Denning in a paper in the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, says of the Tokugawa despotism : ‘It would hardly be possible to find an atmosphere less congenial to mental development than that which existed under the grinding despotism of the Tokugawa Shoguns. All forms of original thought, all attempts to encourage independent investigation, were suspected and suppressed.’ Mr. Nosè is further quoted as describing the evil effects of this system still manifest in Japan. Mr. Sydney L. Gulick, in his book, *Evolution of the Japanese*, says of the Tokugawa system : ‘The absolutism of the Tokugawa Shogunate served to arouse ever-growing opposition because of its stern repression of individual opinion. It not only forbade the Christian religion, but also all independent thought in religion, philosophy, and in politics. The particular form of Confucian moral philosophy which it held was forced on all public teachers of Confucianism. Dissent was not only heretical but treasonable.’

stricted development of the idea of individual right—under the protection, or even the authority, of religious dogmas dating from the Reformation—is complicated and difficult. It furnishes a religious as well as a political problem. And the re-ordering, or the re-adjustment, of the individual's relation to the State would seem to involve more than a recantation of political principle. It seems that we should also contemplate the necessity of our abjuration of some of the religious principles of the heroic Reformation era.

In Japan different historical and contemporary ideas modify the constant and unappeasable struggle that makes the domestic history of States—the struggle to harmonise the interest of the individual with that of the mass of individuals. A political despotism has been dethroned in Japan. Individualism has thus been released from restraint, and, free even from the curbing reins of religious dogma, may, in one sense, be regarded as more free, and capable of greater licence, than European individualism under the ægis of the individualistic conception of Christian dogma introduced with the Reformation. But, besides that the tradition of a paternal relationship between government and governed lingers on in Japan as an effect of ages of practice, there has arisen in the consciousness of the nation an idea, in its essence religious, by virtue of which State and country—especially as these are visualised in the Emperor and in the recognition of his sacrosanctity—are elevated to the supreme place in the psychological outlook of the nation, and there demand the absolute homage and service ever to be paid to a supreme fact.

In place of the religious ideas of the great Reformation epoch in the history of Christianity, encouraging,

as they have inevitably tended to encourage in the great States of the West, the assertion of individualism, by affirming the importance of the individual's position and responsibility, there is in Japan an idea, to all intents and purposes religious, of the supreme importance of the State. The influence of this idea, its high place in the consciousness of the nation, and its power in the regulation of the order of the Japanese State, have been variously illustrated in previous chapters. As against prevailing religious ideas in the great States of the West its tendency must evidently be to curb rather than to encourage the assertion of individualism, and to compose rather than to accentuate that struggle—the inevitable struggle—of the individual with the mass which it is the major concern of all Governments to control, even if it be, as it is, a necessity of their life that it should exist. That State which has the superior means—in the shape of an idea at least semi-religious—of preventing this necessary and permanent struggle from assuming from time to time the aspect and reality of a war of classes, evidently has its stability more surely guaranteed than the State or States with no dominating idea, but only the actual power of the State, as the restraining and controlling agent. Japan, for the time being, is fortunate in being able to utilise a powerful quasi-religious idea for an eminently useful political purpose—that of forestalling the situation in which the great States of the West find themselves confronted with the necessity of readjusting the basis of the individual's relation to the State, at the peril of disorder, if not of chaos, in their characteristic political modes and institutions.

Advantaging itself—almost unconsciously perhaps—of the support and the authority of the semi-religious



idea of the State's supreme importance prevailing in the mind of the nation, and seeking also perhaps to confirm that authority by exhibiting it in espousal with the most modern theories of European political science, the Japanese Government permeates its *régime* with methods and acts which are virtually socialistic in their significance, and thus seeks, consciously or unconsciously, further to prevent the growth of a situation such as that resulting from the unrestrained individualism of the West.<sup>1</sup> And the tradition of paternal government which the present *régime* receives from the pre-modern history of Japan, though a fact rather than an idea, is perpetuated by these acts, and receives the continuing sanction of the people's approval through the perpetuation of their habit of appealing to it.

In the category of ideas assuring the State the means of regulating the social struggle, there is also in Japan, besides the excessive and almost religious devotion of the people to the idea of state, as opposed to individual interest, a family and marriage ethic whose conventional influence is still potent enough to act as a remarkable restraint upon the expression of egoistic aim in the sphere of the individual's private interests and relationships. The primitive stage of development at which the idea of individual political right has arrived under a Constitution which is but seventeen years old, and which was almost the gift of a kindly disposed Government, for the present forbids its being regarded as a formidable aid to the assertion of individualistic ideas. More potent, indeed, as incitements to the assertion of sectional and class interests are the ideas of material advantage which an era of new and exciting industrial and commercial

<sup>1</sup> The nationalisation of railways, the creation of State industrial monopolies, the subsidising of private enterprise, are responsibilities recently resumed by the Japanese Government.

adventure must sow in the minds of a people hitherto so poor as the Japanese.

In the end, however, it has to be said that the most salient of all Japanese ideas—the religious importance and significance of the State—together with much of the social practice of the country, and the negative effect of the people's primitive conception of their place and their rights under a constitutional system, furnish an assurance that, for the more immediate future, the main career and aims of the Government are far less likely to be disturbed and shaken by the attempts, sometimes almost desperate, and nearly always dangerous, to readjust the basis of the social struggle which are being witnessed, and promise to be more and more witnessed, in the West. Happy under the *régime* of a concept of State that induces the great mass of the people to invest the State authority—more especially the authority of the Emperor, which, when the need arises, can always be made to denote that of the State—with a mantle of mystical sacrosanctity, there is no immediate menace to the solidarity, or even to the serenity, of authority in Japan from the confused and nearly always selfish aim of Japanese political parties, or from the idea of an infeasible, individual, political right, which, as in Europe, is certain ultimately to be fostered under the educative process of constitutional forms of government. For the time being Japanese political parties are impotent, from a variety of causes, to become the real government of the day, and for the time being the Constitution is little more than a form. Neither the individual nor the political party is capable at present of becoming the major fact of State, and thereby of tearing the mask of sacrosanctity from the present *régime*.

Yet it remains to be said that the State, being

deprived of its religious character in the eyes of the people, Japan stands—she will stand—in much more serious jeopardy from the incessant social struggle than the great States of Europe. The latter have always within them the hope and prospect of a new genesis of the idea of common interest in the common recognition by all classes of religious ideas of common or universal application. In the last extremity the idea of God, and the recognition of a common obligation to the idea, have often contributed effectively to the reconciliation of opposing political interests in European States. Japan has no real religious resource for the renewal or re-organisation of a State authority which itself represents the supreme religious fact in the consciousness of the nation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The author has in this chapter stated the conditions for the more immediate future. The probabilities of a remoter future are sketched in the next chapter. This remoter future is menaced by the disappearance of the religious attributes of the State, especially as these are represented by the Japanese Imperial autocracy.

## XXVII

### THE ISSUE OF CONSTITUTIONALISM

JAPAN—the rise of Japan—may seem to celebrate the opening of a new epoch. In Europe there are many signs of the close of an age ; in Japan there seems to be the promise of the opening of an era. In Europe, ancient and once powerful ideas are stricken as with death ; in Japan, the human mind seems to recover from the pains of the birth of ideas destined to govern the future. In Europe, a crisis of thought, if not of action, seems preparing—the same in kind, as profound in significance, as that which marked that miraculous conjuncture of events—the death of the Greek and Roman method, and the birth of the method of Christianity. In Japan there is the appearance of a new synthesis, a new concentration, a new construction and interpretation of life. So far as it is yet formulated, one might say of this new synthesis, this new interpretation, that its aim, its basis, its motive, is the adoption and enthronement of the scientific idea as the presiding arbiter in human affairs, in place of the religious idea.

In truth, the whole appearance is deceptive. Rather is it probable that Japan is destined to be swept into the vortex of the same perplexities, the same criticisms, the same apprehensions, the same necessities, that ‘project’ a crisis of European history, if they do not indeed

already represent a crisis. It may even be that Japan is destined to sweep into the vortex of this crisis the whole of that Asia which, by racial affinities, though possibly not by intellectual sympathies, tends to behold and to accept her as an exemplar.

Japan has not solved the religious question in the sense of determining its existence as the permanent or fundamental question for humanity in every stage of civilisation, as in every state of barbarism. Her achievements, her recent past, her strong and confident present, and even her more immediate future, may suggest that she has succeeded, mainly by investing the political State and its leading symbols with a robe of sacrosanctity not unlike the majestic mantle of religion, in dismissing the religious question as Europe knows it from the consciousness and the apprehension of men.

There is, however, for Japan a remoter future, a prospect which, if distant, is yet almost a certain event and crisis of her career. The past and present advantages to Japan, in her modern era, of the idea of the religious character of Emperor and State, have been illustrated. This idea has been the important lever of achievements and of deeds hardly paralleled in history. Its usefulness is far from exhausted. Its present life is vivid ; its influence is assured for a period which will be determined by Japan's circumstances. This period may be considerable. At its close, or in the period of its decadence, Japan will find the religious question assume the same character and the same importance in her outlook that it assumes in the consciousness of Europe.

It might almost be said that Japan, so far from dismissing the religious question from the world, and from its presiding rank among the vital interests of men, rather confirms every supposition of its importance and

its permanence. For if it be true that the animus and motive of her wonderful modern era have been intellectual and scientific, it is also certain that its success has been possible only under the protection, or by virtue of the authority, of an idea in its essence religious, though differing from the religious concepts of Europe and European civilisation. The Japanese have not had the dogmas of Christianity for their support and inspiration, but they have had a religious concept of Emperor and State which, in the peculiar conditions of the era of Japan's emergence from a self-centred isolation, has been to them almost as powerful a stay and as potent a motive as the doctrines of a universal religion might furnish.

Incapable of disproving in their own example and experience that 'need of gods' which the heart of every phase of European civilisation has confessed, the Japanese have made a god of their Emperor and State. These have represented the absolute idea in their consciousness, somewhat as the dogmas of Christianity—in varying shape, as it may be—represent absolute ideas constituting the religious or spiritual authority in European States.

Every circumstance of Japan's recent history—her history since she resumed relations with the world—has tended to assure the authority of Emperor, State, or nationality, as a religious idea, and to confirm the faith of the people therein. Menaced by a thousand difficulties arising from the inadequacy of their ancient political and intellectual system in presence of that of Europe; moved to the greatest sacrifices in order to achieve, as it were, their mere preservation as a State; conscious in recent years of the imminence of a struggle with a great foreign Power—a struggle that

might demand the immolation of their whole resources ; compelled, moreover, amidst an era of fundamental change and almost universal reform to find a refuge from confusion and chaos in some easily grasped and definite 'fixed idea,' the nation has had every incentive to accept patriotism as their faith, and their Emperor—already, by the popular mythology, affirmed divine—as their god. If modern Japan is to be understood, it must never be forgotten that Japanese patriotism is a new and recent emotion of the Japanese people. It is an emotion, essentially, if not exclusively, of their modern era, a product of the conditions of the era. And its very newness has assisted its strength and promoted its influence. It is not, indeed, very surprising that it should have assumed the character and exercised the function of a religion. A people of an eager and sensitive genius, of an alert and responsive mind, having no acquaintance with the certainties of religion in the form of dogma, at the very time when they most needed the support of such certainties, they have found strength and inspiration in a religious idea which every circumstance of their ancient and modern history has disposed them to view as their highest and most 'saving' thought. Opposition breeds, as it requires, opposition. Necessity evokes necessity. The greatest necessity of modern Japan has been the reconstruction of the polity and the civilisation of the country, in order that it might be capable of resisting the pressure of the Powers and of the civilisation of Europe. This great and primary necessity has been met by the elevation of State and polity into the place of the master fact—the place of the great and primary or religious fact—in the consciousness of the nation.

But it is obvious that this cannot be a permanent

status. The constitutional idea, unless it should be stifled in its very birth by the reappearance of a political absolutism like that of pre-modern Japan, must disclose the purely political character and sanctions of an idea, whose religious mask has been the creation, because it has been the necessity, of political conditions and circumstances peculiar and abnormal.

The only end and purpose of a constitutional *régime* is the assertion and recognition of the people, or of the units composing the people, as, at the least, an equally important factor with the ruler in the State's governance. This has been the consummation of the constitutional idea in Europe. And always the ruler has emerged as a purely political fact—a purely political character, fulfilling a purely political function. That the assertion and recognition of the people as an equally potent political fact with the ruler has not ended the difficulties of States, but rather, perhaps, rendered them more complex, is also certain, and the disappointment of the great hopes reposed in the constitutional idea might well have thrown the peoples of Europe into the anarchy of despair. This anarchy has been prevented mainly by the fusing and consolidating power of dogmas and ideas not political but religious. Mainly by the aid of the clear and definite concepts of Christianity—providing for the distracted minds of men a permanent basis of repose and consolation not disturbed by the disturbance of political ideas,—Europe has emerged, renewed and capable, from the most formidable crises. The power of self-renewal inherent in Christianity has been Europe's abiding resource. In Japan the constitutional idea must disturb, as it long since disturbed in Europe, the fact of political autocracy and the idea of the divine right. But Japan,



in the midst of this disturbance, has no resource in religious dogma. The disturbance of her political autocracy is also the dethronement of her supreme religious idea—the sacrosanctity of Emperor. This bulwark destroyed, she will be compelled to re-interpret life, not in terms of politics, but in terms of religion. The only alternative is the reconstitution of such a political absolutism as prevailed in pre-modern Japan. But this reconstitution is obviously no longer possible, for the power and permanence of the Shogunate despotism ultimately reposed upon and was authorised by a mystical Emperor who, if he was a divine fiction, was nevertheless a convenient, and, in fact, sufficient symbol for the excuse and explanation of a usurping sovereignty.

It is impossible for a people to worship themselves, and the discovery by a people that the State is themselves, and not their ruler,—the discovery the Japanese are invited to make,—even if it does not modify their devotion, in exigent circumstances, to the welfare of the State, must deprive the latter of its sacrosanct character and rob it of every mystic attribute that seems to authorise a religious attitude towards it, and towards its supreme symbols. The people cannot but cease to adore a transcendental or quasi-transcendental entity incapable of retaining its political prerogative. In other words, unless the Japanese people, or their representatives, the political parties, consent to political stultification by abandoning their pretensions to a share of the government—a share which, under any Constitution, must be nearly the whole of it,—they are destined to behold the dissolution of that religious idea under whose authority and power alone their leaders have been able to bring into being the splendid fabric of the Japanese

modern era. The development and the event of the processes here implied may not indeed be a speedy development or an imminent event. Yet the development and the event are inevitable unless Japan is to deny or to reverse the very processes of the human mind.<sup>1</sup>

Japan's greatest difficulties—the greatest difficulties of her modern career and history—are, in truth, all in the future. They are inherent in the ultimate realisation of her leaders that an intellectual or scientific theory of life and of civilisation is not sufficient. For Japan's past achievements are not wholly intellectual and scientific. Though they may be achievements of the intellect and the science of her leaders, they have been possible only under the sanctions of a religious idea—the sacrosanctity and quasi-divine status—of the head of the State. This idea cannot conceivably retain its authority when it has been deprived of its essential character through the operation of a political Constitution. It may even be said that the very success of Japan's modern era, especially its success against the menace offered by the aggression of a great European Power, undermines the dominion of the principal idea by which this success has been achieved. The removal of every external danger to Japan's modern career will permit and almost encourage a licence of inquiry into and criticism of the origins of that idea which must ultimately assist its destruction.

Can a people continue to believe in a god whom their Constitution must deprive of his political authority? Can they continue to accept a religion whose necessity

<sup>1</sup> The struggles of the political parties to achieve power had already, before the recent war, created a situation virtually of chaos in Japanese domestic politics (Chap. XXIV.). The war conveniently postponed a crisis which, apparently political, must also, almost as truly, be religious.

will have disappeared through the disappearance of the conditions that gave rise to it? These are the great questions of Japan's future. Europe has never known these questions, because her religion, well-nigh from the dawn of her history, has been supersensual and transcendental; because its true sphere and origin has been a realm of being impenetrable and unassailable by human sense. In Japan a nation is destined to discover the humanity of a fleshly god and the unreligious character of a religious conception of the State. In claiming political liberty they must overthrow their god. In realising, through the devotion with which their god has inspired them, the fact of their unassailable political power they must deprive their religion of its sanctions by depriving it of its necessity. Here, it may be, is demonstrated the eternal antinomy of history.

Thus modern Japan, the product of an intellectual impetus, and of an intellectual and scientific effort by a group of leading men, while professing through these leaders to banish the religious factor from civilisation, must inevitably fail because she confesses through her people that the success of the intellectual and scientific effort of her leaders has been possible only by reason of the existence, or because of the revival, in the national consciousness of a religious idea,—the sacrosanctity of Emperor—Heaven-descended—and thereby of State, nationality, and fatherland.

All that may be said of Japan in relation to religion, which—be it only in the shape of that 'necessity of gods' ever subduing the vast majority of men—remains to-day, as always, the one paramount question for society and for the individual, is that she may change the concept of religion, but that she will never disprove its

necessity. She may bring it forth from temples or deprive it of the character of dogma ; she cannot dismiss it from life. And in this fact is inherent the necessity of the ultimate identity of her future—in the sense of its having the same consummation—with the future of Europe and the world. Here is shadowed forth a hope of the ultimate fusion of Japan's particular destiny with the universal destiny.

## XXVIII

### THE CHRIST-PERSONALITY

SOME demonstration has been given of the probability of the ultimate failure of Japan's present formulation of the moral basis of life to satisfy the conditions of an age and a career in which a political autocracy cannot again, as in the era of Japan's isolation from the world, assume the character and discharge the functions of a Providence. The insufficiency of her present formulation—or variety of formulations—of the moral basis of life is indeed already acknowledged with a measure of regret by her leading thinkers and publicists.<sup>1</sup> Her most hopeful, and for special emergencies, her most potent presentation of the truth of the moral basis of life and experience—her investment of State, Emperor, and nationality with a mantle of sacrosanctity and much of the character of a religious object—is ultimately no more than a religion of loyalty dictating a canon of political morality. Its destiny, in face of the discoveries accompanying an experience of constitutional Government, is its probable dethronement from the high and splendid place it occupies as the dominant fact in the consciousness of the nation. The assertion of con-

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. XVII.

stitutional rights and principles will deprive it of the faint aspect of universality which it possesses—that universality which is necessary to a religion of permanent and general appeal.

The necessary implication is that Japan must be forced to a re-interpretation of life, and thereby to a new formulation of its moral basis. In other words, the destruction of the religious character with which a fact in reality political has been invested, is destined to force from Japan a recognition, as ample as is admitted by the peoples and polities of Europe, of the necessity of a religion universal, transcendental, and, in a sense, supersensual.

It is true, no doubt, that we do not find in Japan a people to whose leading types explanations, approximately absolute—the explanations of religious dogma or of philosophy—have hitherto been a primary necessity. To the clamorous need that besets the European mind of appreciably clear and approximately definite views, religious or philosophical, of its own origin and destiny, and of the origin and destiny of the universe on whose mysteries it broods, the Japanese may be said hitherto to have been indifferent. Unconscious of this need, unconscious of the vast political importance of the explanations that supply it, there is a predisposition in the Japanese mind to view with a modified enthusiasm, which is very nearly indifference, the advent of any and of every ‘body of truth,’ philosophical or religious. It is not, however, a proper inference from Japan’s past that Japan will in the future be able to ignore the function which religion has fulfilled in Europe. For the function of religion, its interpretation of the world and its moral dictate and authority, was fulfilled in pre-modern Japan by

a political despotism, professing itself authorised by a sacrosanct Emperor, and usurping, as has been shown,<sup>1</sup> a universal or absolute dominion over the Japanese consciousness. The Japanese absolutism of pre-modern eras was as nearly as possible universal in its regulation of the conduct and the ideas of the nation, and in this character and function it represented the combined office of a political authority and of a religious ecclesiasticism founded on dogma.

And the conditions of Japan's modern era have in the past tended to perpetuate, through the assent of the people,—the enthusiastic assent of a passionate nationalism which has beheld in Emperor and State the absolute facts of life,—a system which a tyranny formerly compelled them to accept.

Finally embarked, however, on an era of universal inquiry, enterprise, and experiment, in which every institution and every idea of an enormously complicated alien civilisation must come before the nation for their acceptance or rejection, it is evident that, on the destruction or exhaustion of the usefulness of a religion of loyalty, and of the abandonment—already admitted by the educated class—of the vague and chimerical allies of this religion found in illusive Buddhism and superstitious Shintoism, Japan must encounter the necessity of a broad, comprehensive, and at the same time clear and definite re-interpretation of life, such as Christianity in one form or another furnishes to the mind of Europe. In encountering and satisfying this necessity, dogma—dogmatic Christianity—may find a new justification if not a rehabilitation in Japan. The endeavour to meet pressing political and social needs, which ultimately can only be satisfied by explanations

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 337, 338.

comprehensive and approximately absolute, will always pronounce doom on the negative presentments of Agnosticism. There is thus in the future—more or less distant, perhaps—a clear prospect of a Japan forced, at the peril of chaos in her social modes and her governing ideas, or at the worse peril of the reconstitution of the rigid despotism of her pre-modern age, to re-interpret life. And this re-interpretation must be a re-interpretation in terms of religion as conceived in Europe.

Japan's modern autocracy, even if founded upon, or authorised by a religious idea, must prove incapable of exercising that universal, political, moral, and social function over the nation which was wielded by Japan's pre-modern despotism. For whereas the latter was able to prevent the intrusion of every alien political or religious idea, the modern religio-political autocracy of Japan invites the nation to challenge its own political authority through a Constitution and to discover its own secular character by inquiry into and criticism of its origins. The door is thus thrown open to a religious authority ultimately necessary for the control and regulation of those wide spheres of the national consciousness which must be left unoccupied or unsatisfied by an autocracy incapable of assuming the universal and providential function of the pre-modern Shogunate despotism. Only by reconstituting the moral, political, and social absolutism of pre-modern Japan can the present or future rulers of the country prevent the necessity arising of a re-interpretation of life by the nation—a re-interpretation which must recognise that the regulation of life and conduct requires more than a purely political authority; a re-interpretation which will affirm that a political absolutism is impossible



because men are more than political beings ; a re-interpretation which will overwhelm the endeavour of present Japanese leaders and thinkers to banish the religious or supernatural factor—the transcendental or divine idea—from the governance of human affairs.

Japan, then, may ultimately be driven—she probably will ultimately be driven—to recognise Christianity as at any rate a political necessity. The practice of European political ideas and institutions must disclose to her the impossibility of their permanent operation without the aid of some form of European ecclesiasticism. Some ‘body of truth,’ some conception of dogma, some organisation representing the authority of a definite religious interpretation of life, and bearing directly on the conduct and morals of the nation, will be no less necessary in Japan, in the ultimate event, than it has been and is in Europe. Bare political necessity must force a people, practising ideas and institutions that confer on them a large measure of responsibility, to guard themselves—their political order and their social system—from becoming the prey of an anarchy of ideas, or the victims of a new political tyranny.

If it be not easy, amid the partial chaos in which the once firm and solid fabric of Christian dogma has been involved, to foresee with much assurance the willing entrance of Japan into the fold of dogma,—even upon her recognition of the necessity to her political life of a dogmatic religious authority,—there remains for Japan that which Europe herself, in a time when criticism seems to threaten the very existence of the dogmatic sanctions of Christianity, tends more and more to discover—a way of approach to Christianity through the Personality of its Founder.

For the claim of Christianity is, of course, twofold.

As a theological system it proffers a religious philosophy, on which a political ecclesiasticism and a social practice may be, as they have been, based. It also proffers, however, a unique Personality. Even if the political ecclesiasticism and the social practice based upon the Christian theological system be challenged by criticism, the Personality of Christ remains, a supreme credential and recommendation of the religion of Christ.

It is, indeed, but a truism to say that the appeal of Christianity in the ultra-Protestant States of Europe, at any rate in the last hundred years, has been mainly the appeal, not of an intellectual religious system, but of a Personality, whose life and whose death claim a unique adoration. And it is probable that only upon a recognition of the supremacy of this Personality can any fabric of Japanese Christianity be firmly based.

Is, then, the secret of the supremacy, of the unique and absolute moral authority, of the Christ-Personality discoverable by the Japanese in the degree in which it has been discovered and—as one should say—‘experienced’ in Europe?

In attempting to answer so poignant a question as this it has to be allowed that, though the fact of the supremacy of the Christ-Personality in the consciousness of Europe be unchallengeable—even in an era when the traditional and dogmatic sanctions of the Christian dogmatic system are seriously confused—it is yet difficult to state the ultimate basis of Europe’s acknowledgment of this supremacy. To a large proportion of the subjects and members of the civilisation of Europe, the Personality of the Founder of Christianity speaks with an authority which, in reality, is the authority of a great and complicated ecclesiastical organisation, in the midst of whose hierarchical and doctrinal panoplies the

Christ-Personality is an immense and looming shadow rather than a historical character, with some at least of the attributes and lineaments of humanity. To others of us, haply, while we perceive in Him a Personality clearly linked to our own through particular or characteristic manifestations, He is yet robed in the mantle of a shining and inexplicable quality, in which instinctively we acclaim and worship the Divine and the Universal.

What is true is that, apart from historical evidences ; apart from ecclesiasticism, and the necessity of religious organisation and government ; and apart from dogma and from the verdicts of criticism on dogma, there ever remains to the European consciousness and to the European religious sense a Christ-Personality with an appealing and compelling power, which can never be wholly explained or completely analysed. And the destiny of Christianity in Japan—perhaps in Asia—may be bound up with the question whether the Japanese consciousness and the Japanese religious sense are ultimately susceptible of the same impression of power, appealing and compulsive, inherent in the acts and speech, in the life and death, of this divine Personality. Religious organisation is a State necessity, if nothing more ; ecclesiasticism is inevitable ; dogma is the only possible intellectual expression of religion ; but the beginning of all religion is personality. If Japan be incapable at present of the organisation, the ecclesiasticism, and the dogma of Christianity, the reference must be to the Personality which is the beginning of Christianity ; and this reference, simply stated, means the question whether the magnetism of that Personality is capable of drawing the love, the veneration, the adoration, and ultimately perhaps the worship, of the Japanese in the manner and

to the degree in which it has compelled the love, the veneration, the adoration, and the worship of the completest and the best characters in European history, and the real or conventional attachment of the mass of the European peoples.

The appeal of the Personality of Christ in Europe—its appeal to the best and greatest heroes of spiritual conflict in European history—is an appeal to the imagination and the heart of Europe as truly as it is an appeal to Europe's necessity of religion, and Europe's faculty of reason detecting in Christ the divine revelation and illustration of a law or laws ruling in the most secret domains of human consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

Idealist, in one sense, though the Japanese are, it is a lesson of their recent and remote history that it is more truly the practical and material aspect of all 'forms of truth' that invites their attention and adhesion, and if a question were made of the usefulness of an absolute moral example like that of Christ, their answer may for long be doubtful. They are deficient in that combination of imagination and sensibility—supreme thought and profound feeling—out of which the deepest, the richest, and the most critical religious experience grows.

<sup>1</sup> One cannot, of course, propose to examine and analyse the credentials of Christ—if one may use the words—as Europe views them, in a short chapter of a book like the present, but amid all the confusion of the age, it is always worthy of remembrance that the completest characters in European history—those in whom Europe recognises the greatest likeness to the Universal which is God—have nearly always been the least capable of 'overlooking' or ignoring Christ. Such are Goethe—forced, in the midst of agony and tears, to hail in Christ the 'divine man,' and himself hailed as the universal man by Napoleon. Such also are Dante, Cromwell, Luther, Napoleon himself, and—there is every reason to believe—Shakespeare. It is the writer's view that some, at any rate, of these men bowed before Christ because, in their measureless and God-like genius, they would fain have rivalled Him in His achievements, had they not felt that the colossal responsibility of His task would have broken them to pieces. Their resort, their refuge, was to acclaim Him divine, and the achievement of His task a divine work.

This combination, the mother of all great art, the secret of all great agonies whence great art is born, will always find, as it has always found, its highest example and its most original precedent in the Christ-Personality. Japanese triumphs in the domain of imagination, as that divine faculty is coloured and prompted by sensibility, have never been, in the richest sense, great.

The heroisms of action with which the Japanese mind, contemplating Japanese history, is familiar, and which it tends to adopt as the models of its own conduct, greatly resemble the heroisms of action which have always wielded a powerful sway over the imaginations and the sympathies of European peoples. Heroisms of intellectual struggle and religious conflict are, however, less common in Japanese history, and it is doubtful if the spiritual pains of an Augustine, a Luther, or a Savonarola could ever be understood by Japanese minds the most sensitive to the dread impact of the mysteries that environ us. The domination of the Personality of the Founder of Christianity in European history is, in one aspect, a domination of the best characters and the noblest minds of that history, a domination of the men who, in the intensity of their sufferings of spirit, have beheld in Him a Being who was like them, but larger than them, in the form and in the stress of His agonies. Europe finds in the Christ a supreme Personality, because it beholds in Him the crowning example of the sufferings of the European soul in the endeavour—the endeavour that is forced upon it—to attain to God through the barriers of the flesh. And Europe has always offered a reverence to the heroes of this endeavour as generous as to the men of heroic action who abound in the volume of its

history. There are few examples in Japanese history of the tragedy of this conflict—the supreme conflict of mortal man—whereby the mind of Japan might be led along the path that conducts to the presence of the supreme Exemplar in this species of heroism. It is thus possible that the magnetism of the Christ-Personality in Europe—whatever be its ultimate psychological explanations—is a magnetism that may not be exercised in Asia as it is in Europe, because Asia is racially unresponsive to its power.

Japanese history, though it holds record of many founders of sects of a complaisant and subtle Buddhism, and of many re-interpreters of its vexing and elusive metaphysics, has no outstanding examples of men driven by a purely spiritual impulse to adumbrate in their own persons the supreme example of spiritual protest and revolt that Europe beholds in the Founder of Christianity. Japan's brief experience of Christianity in the seventeenth century was indeed sufficient to show that the race is capable of the martyr's protest in a religious cause, as in a political, but it was too brief an experience to afford any example of religious personality rediscovering, in the agony of its own spiritual pains, the supremacy and universality of the Founder of Christianity, as a succession of heroes of spiritual conflict have rediscovered and re-asserted that Personality—often at the cost of their lives—in European history.

The Japanese, in their addiction to hero-worship—an addiction which, in the sphere of action, is almost the addiction of Europe—have no succession or dynasty of religious personality illustrating the heroism of spiritual protest and revolt, inducing them to admit this species of heroism to a peculiar veneration, and guiding

them to an understanding of the immense importance of the religious factor—that is to say, of Christianity—in the history of Europe.

Yet it is probable that only through a perception of the supremacy, the divine supremacy, of the Christ-Personality will Japan—and in saying Japan one almost says Asia—be swept within the sphere of the moral and religious governance of the Founder of Christianity. The analogy of Europe in itself infers as much. Dogma and ecclesiasticism were always, as they are to-day, a religious and political necessity, a necessity of organised society, but even as the authority of ecclesiasticism is dogma, the authority of dogma is personality, with its explicit declarations, its concrete example, and its living power, for ever indestructible by criticism, by argument, or by sophistry.

The success of the appeal of the Personality of Christ—its successful appeal as, to the European sense, the absolute Personality of history—may be a problem of racial psychology. There is much in Japanese historical evidences and in the bias of Japanese character to suggest that the chief obstacle to the success of this appeal is psychological. Yet, on the other hand, the curious identity, in important respects, of the Japanese mind with the European, suggests that, when the conditions of an abnormal era and an abnormal event in the history of the nation have disappeared, they may find the support, the inspiration, and the consolation which the being and consciousness—the soul—of Europe has found,—which perhaps in the hour of the dire confusion of Christianity as a dogmatic system it is destined more and more to find,—in the divine Personality of the Founder of Christianity.

That the Japanese must be brought within view of the necessity of a religious interpretation of life, ampler, clearer, and more categorical than that which they have found or can find either in a religion of loyalty, or in Bushi-do—their unwritten code of chivalrous conduct—in esoteric Buddhism, or in superstitious Shintoism, is certain, if only because they have adopted institutions and modes which are the product of the clear and categorical religious interpretations—the dogmas, in other words—of Christianity. A result is ultimately inseparable from its cause, and Japan cannot hope to reap the results of the religion of Europe without an ultimate reckoning with their cause.

There are two ways whereby Japan may approach the great divine fact at the heart of that European civilisation in which she seeks completely to habit herself. She may be compelled to examine this divine fact for the doctrines and dogmas upon which to base the religious authority and the comprehensive morality whose necessity, even to her political life, she must ultimately discover. Or she may at last be drawn by the strong cords of a passion of awakened love and devotion towards that Christ-Personality which has arisen from the storms of criticism, in which dogmatic Christianity is involved, more adorable, more majestic, more compelling, more divine, than it had appeared even amid all the panoplies of an elaborate sacerdotalism and an unshaken ecclesiasticism. From a people at once so generous in their recognition of the heroic, and so sensitive to the reality and the sadness of all true glory and loveliness, it is perhaps proper to anticipate first a perception of the unsurpassed heroism and the divine perfection of the life and the Personality of the Founder of Christianity. And that per-



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ception may dawn upon them in its poignant reality, when, amid the final wreck of their ancient ideas, and of their present religion of loyalty, they seek a concrete personality in history that, in its absolute moral authority and universality of appeal, represents a positive solution of life through a triumphant victory over death.

## XXIX

### JAPAN AND EMPIRE

JAPAN, endowed with the aptitude of conquest, is evidently a potential Empire. The analogies of European history, and the logic of the case, suggest that a conquering people will naturally desire conquest and attempt to achieve it. If Japan possesses, as her war with Russia has proved her to possess, a supreme aptitude for war, it may plausibly be argued that she will seek and find the destiny of a warlike or conquering Power.

Yet, while the possession of a special aptitude for conquest may urge a people to satisfy it, Empire—the result of conquest—in the era of a complex civilisation becomes a complicated responsibility demanding the exercise of a multitude of capacities such as need not of necessity accompany a special aptitude for war. The inspiration of a single political motive may carry a State to triumph in a great war ; it can never provide a sufficient basis for the foundation and perpetuation of an Empire. A fabric of Empire to be permanent must repose upon a broad foundation of religious, moral, and political aims and sanctions. For a State, proposing to itself the successful government of diverse peoples, must have regard to their various needs and susceptibilities.

Among the array of motives for Empire with which

the States of Europe have gone abroad upon the world in search of political dominion, religion has ever been prominent. Japan has no such motive.

In Europe, since the rise of Christianity, the most powerful motive for the foundation and maintenance of Empires has been found in the authority or the sanctions of Christianity as an absolute religion. An Empire founded on purely political sanctions has not been known in Europe since the conversion of Constantine, and in the amazing record of the rise and fall of European sovereignties since the disappearance of the Roman Power there is ever present, in the category of sanctions for the destruction of an existing Power or the creation of a new one, the authority of religion usually accepted and affirmed as sufficient for the fact of Empire and for its acts when established. In later epochs of European history—the epochs of the extension of European Empire beyond the frontiers of Europe—the religious impetus has often anticipated or preceded—and even engendered—the political motive as a sanction for the extension of European power and the spread of European civilisation. It would indeed be a distortion of the facts to represent that the pure light of religion has been the gleam which the political agents of Europe have always followed in their enterprises and adventures, but it is certain that a profound conviction of a mission ultimately religious has always been a supremely important authorising motive in the extension of the power of every European sovereignty in Asia, in Africa, in the Americas. Our history—the history of the over-sea Empires of European States—is streaked with the religious motive; our ultimate authority for the creation and extension of over-sea Empire has been the authority of a religion conceived and accepted as

absolute. This mighty agency has been the inspiration, if not the actual driving-force, of some of the greatest of the pioneers of our political order and our civilised system in alien lands.

European civilisation, in truth, is ultimately authorised by European Christianity. The peoples of Europe have gone abroad upon the world for purposes of political conquest, armed, if not inspired, by the authority of a religion conceived as absolute. This absolute religion has been the most potent psychological influence in the inspiration and conduct of the European 'mission' to the world. Where it may not have been professed as the dominating motive, it has been the stay, the support, and the ultimate authority of all other motives.

Associated with the theory and the fact of Empire, it is evident that the incentive and the animus of the absolute idea—embodied in an absolute religion—must be the most powerful of all motives.

In place of the inspiring concept of an absolute religion the Japanese possess or profess only a religious nationalism—a concept of the sacrosanctity of their State, their Emperor, their race. This may be, and indeed is, a powerful incentive to political action looking to the creation or the extension of a Japanese Empire, but it is not a religion which the Japanese could offer to alien peoples as an explanation of, or as compensation for, Japanese political domination. It is not a religious ethic or interpretation which the Japanese could offer to alien peoples in place of their own; it is not a universal and unseen ideal which the Japanese might use—if one may so write without a Machiavellian implication—to soothe the susceptibilities of alien peoples. Nor could it be a cloak under which they might approach them in

the guise of political philanthropists especially interested in the extension of civilisation and the march of progress.

The ideals of Christianity—the example of its Founder—whatever may be said of the authority of the Christian dogmatic system, ever act as a restraint upon the conduct towards subject peoples of the political representatives of the nations professing the Christian religion, if only for the reason that these ideals must otherwise furnish a ground of accusation by alien peoples, who do not fail to observe the contrast between flagitious conduct and virtuous profession.

Japanese nationalism, potent as a motive and an animus for the Japanese themselves, has no quality of universality such as might commend it to the hearts of alien peoples. Whatever benefits Japanese rule might confer on the Chinese, it is unlikely that the latter should ever be persuaded to regard the Japanese Emperor as a god.

The motive that Japan sometimes proposes to herself as a substitute for religion—the motive in the pursuit of which her most ardent and persistent endeavour has been engaged in recent years—may indeed furnish her for a time with the necessary animus to Empire and to influence among alien peoples. The interest of science, and of scientific progress, is often by Japanese leaders held aloft as the inspiring symbol of a Japanese mission to the peoples of the Asiatic continent, whose affections Europe has never quite succeeded in enlisting even while in the fullest degree animated in her overtures by a religious motive. And if an open and unabashed lust of territorial aggrandisement be impossible to-day, Japan may find a motive of Empire—an animus to herself and an apology to her possible critics—in the

adoption and profession of a mission of scientific civilisation in Asia and the Pacific. And this motive, though it cannot be permanent, may carry her far along the path to the actual dominion which she already exercises morally over the peoples of Eastern Asia.

The permanent bases of Empire—of all civilised government—being, however, moral and religious, it is clear that Japan, without a religious motive, with no presentment of truth, no ‘body’ of religious truth, on which a comprehensive moral dictate, appealing to the total consciousness of men, may be founded, lacks both that impetus to Empire and that justification of it which are familiar as the animating principle and the important object of Empire in the history of European sovereignties.

The absence of a religious motive and animus from the sanctions of her ‘mission’ to alien peoples must ultimately reduce Japan abroad—in contact with alien peoples—to a non-moral, non-religious, or purely political justification of Empire. And there can be no permanence in this justification, since political forms are always being remodelled unless they array themselves in the repulsive habit of a permanent and unrelenting *force majeure*. Japanese domination of alien peoples, without the motive and justification of religion, is conceivable as a permanent fact only in the form of a political tyranny.

Even on the assumption that Japan shall acquire a true moral and religious animus to justify and inspire the extension of her political dominion abroad, it is still doubtful if she possess the subsidiary capacities for Empire—for the proper regulation of the political impulses and the just treatment of the susceptibilities of alien peoples. She has furnished a good example of the

political regulation of an alien and semi-barbarous people in Formosa, and a bad one of the just treatment of the susceptibilities of an alien and semi-civilised people in Korea. Japan's characteristic deficiency is a deficiency in the quality of imagination. From this regnant quality springs the power of understanding alien and inferior peoples, and also—when it is joined to sensibility—the capacity to regard their susceptibilities with that breadth of sympathy which, in the organisation and regulation of Empire, is not only morally admirable but politically successful. Yet this question—however it may be met—is preceded if not pre-judged by the negative answer that must for the present be made to the prior question whether Japan possess the ideas, the religious and moral sanctions, upon which the Empire of a civilised State, to be in any degree permanent among alien peoples—to be accepted with any degree of enthusiasm by them—must be founded.

Were she content to present to the world the example of a powerful State satisfied with the possession of a hegemonic power—moral and intellectual—in lieu of actual territorial Empire, Japan, in the variety and cogency of her claims to this species of Empire in Asia, recalls the illustrious example of Greece.

Japan has secured to her the moral and intellectual hegemony of a system vaster than the system of Europe—presided over in turn by Germany, by France, by England—or that of the Mediterranean, dominated by Greece. The moral and intellectual—and possibly in the stress of circumstances the political—hegemony of Asia is assured to Japan by a preponderance of powers and capacities unassailable without such a transformation of conditions as is inconceivable upon any data within sight at the present time. Asia has now more to fear

from the downfall of Japan than from her domination, and the racial units of Asia realise that singly, or even in combination, they could not hope to compass the overthrow of Japan. The political conditions securing the pre-eminence of the United States on the American continents are perhaps comparable to the conditions securing for Japan an Asiatic hegemony, but a category of moral and intellectual claims assures Japan's position in Asia as that of the United States can never be assured in the two Americas. For Asia beholds, with a measure of wonder, Japan's success in the adoption or adaptation of a civilised method which hitherto she has chiefly had cause to fear as an instrument of power in the hands of Europe. Japan secures from Asia all the admiration and respect due to a champion who has probed and appropriated the mysterious powers of a strange and terrible visitor in Asia. And Japan by this success inevitably translates the Asiatic repulsion towards Europe into an attraction towards herself. Asia readily persuades herself that, under Japanese tutelage, the achievements of one member of the Asiatic family may be within the powers of the others. Japan claims in Asia the prestige due to a preceptor as well as the respect compelled by an unsurpassed demonstration of power. And Asia must tend to establish special relations with Japan in the measure of her past unfriendly feeling towards Europe.

The translation of a moral and intellectual hegemony into territorial occupation or actual political dominion cannot, however, be accomplished in any permanent sense by Japan upon the sanctions and justifications she is able at present to proffer. Favourable as are the conditions under which Japan may aspire to the domination of Asia, it is more than probable that this domination will never be more than that of an



illustrious exemplar, unless she be capable of initiating and maintaining Empire in the repellent character and habit of a political tyranny. Without a religious motive to conciliate the opposition or soothe the susceptibilities of peoples over whom her destiny of conquest might place her in charge; unchecked by the restraints and the disciplines which even the mere profession of a religion, absolute and universal in character, imposes on the political conduct of a conquering people; lacking, that is to say, both a universal and permanent motive and a constant and unvarying standard of conduct in her relations with alien peoples, Japan can neither plead the excuses nor employ the agencies of Empire as these are known in the history of every great and quasi-permanent sovereignty in European history. Japan here again encounters, or is destined to encounter, the inadequacy for the service of great human aims—as in her own experience she is destined to encounter the inadequacy for the satisfaction of great human needs—of a purely intellectual interpretation of life, and a purely political application of morals.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The author has attempted to state the ideas and motives underlying Japanese aspirations after Empire, or to indicate in what sense and degree adequate ideas and motives are lacking from Japan's psychological 'furnishing.' It is well to remember, however, that Japan's primary aim abroad for some time to come must be the conquest, not of a territorial, but of a commercial and industrial Empire. As is inferred in Chap. XXIII., Japanese designs of Empire must be subordinated to a policy of industrial and commercial expansion imposed upon a great political State which is financially poor. Japan's opposition to the partition of China, in the consummation of which she might expect a formidable share of the spoils, has an important, if not its main, *raison d'être* in the fact that Japan requires the whole of China for commercial purposes much more than she needs a part of it, however large, for territorial aggrandisement. To Japanese statesmen the alienation of Manchuria from Chinese sovereignty, even to Japan herself, has been a possibility which, as an accomplished fact, was likely, or would be likely, to tend to the partition of the Empire and thereby to the probable loss of Japan's commercial opportunity,—the opportunity she needs in order to base her first-class political status on a firm foundation of financial and material competence,—throughout the greater part of a Chinese Empire parcelled

out among Powers most of which would close the door to Japanese trade in the Chinese territories that would 'fall' to them. Indeed, by affirming and by practising, even to her own cost—to her own cost from the point of view of territorial expansion—the principle of Chinese integrity, for the time being, Japan guards her hopes of commercial empire throughout China. She also guards her political status from a repetition of the menace that Russia, settled in Port Arthur and Manchuria, of necessity offered it. Without a base in Port Arthur and a *point d'appui* in Manchuria, Russia would never have given Japan much cause for anxiety, but that which Russia became with Port Arthur in her possession and Manchuria in her occupation Japan might expect to encounter again in a Germany confirmed in possession of Shantung, or in a France recognised in Yunnan, or even in a Great Britain authorised by formal annexation to maintain armies and arsenals in the Yangtze provinces.

From two points of view, it may be said that Japan is by circumstances prevented from pursuing ideas and aims of political or territorial empire where she might most easily realise them—in China. By opposing and preventing the partition of China, at any rate until present conditions and circumstances have undergone transformation, she may hope to annex a commercial empire, and prevent any political empire save her own from becoming formidable in the Far East. If she fail to prevent partition she might indeed find her territory doubled by formal annexation of several Chinese provinces, but she would also find the remainder—that is, the greater part—of China closed to the trade and commerce whose opportunity in China is so necessary to her material future. Instead of a Chinese Empire which she has already defeated in war, she might find a disintegrated China assume the appearance, if not the reality, of three or four great European Powers dividing with her the political sovereignty of the Eastern Pacific, her own peculiar sphere, and offering her, as Russia has in the past offered her, a potential menace throughout this sphere.

It hardly falls within the scope or intention of this volume to discuss the status as between Japan and Russia, resulting from the recent war. That the war has finally settled the main issue in Russo-Japanese rivalry—the hegemony or overlordship of Eastern Asia—is now not so probable as it appeared after the battles of Mukden and the Japan Sea. Yet, in the writer's view, no modification of conditions such as might authorise the expectation that Russia can secure a different verdict from another appeal to arms, is at present even remotely visible.

### XXX

## THE FINAL QUESTION

To the supreme question one asks of the Japanese 'apparition' an answer, in the main negative, has to be given. Have we, in the sudden and formidable forthcoming of Japan, the appearance of a new idea, of a new interpretation, representing a new 'beginning' of history, the opening of a new adventure of humanity? To this poignant question an answer, in the main negative, must be given. Japan herself would hope,—nay, she would propose,—that she is a new idea, a new interpretation, a new hope. To Europe, at any rate, she is none of these. She is too like the West to be to Europe a new idea; she is too like the East to be a new hope.

There is, in truth, no fresh 'beginning' of history which has not been born from a new religion, or accompanied its propagation. Japan, so far from offering humanity a new religion, proposes to carry on history without one.

As Buddha and Buddhism preside at the origin of the main currents—the important 'beginnings'—of Asiatic history; as the poetry, and with it the theogony, of Homer is the spring whence Hellenism drew draughts of inspiration for the creation of all the splendour and loveliness of its achievement; as

Mahomet, in the character of the 'prophet of God,' sowed the seed of a fanatic and far-spreading religious enthusiasm the while he founded a formidable political system ; so is the beginning of the European era essentially a religious beginning, and the motive and impetus of its triumphs derived from the inspiration and the example of a purely religious Founder.

Let it be admitted that at an abnormal, if not a portentous, epoch in the history of Europe Japan approaches her own immediate tasks with a mind unburdened and a soul unvexed by the most pressing of the dilemmas that confuse the thought and distract the endeavour of Western States. Viewing with a calm which we might almost be disposed to envy, the conflict of issues as between our faith and our science, Japan is able, for the present at least, to approach her political, social, and industrial problems with an unfettered mind to us all but impossible. Though she may not be able to penetrate the darkness of the great enigmas with the clear eye of our faith when its authenticity is assured, it is also true that she does not look upon that darkness through the tears of our despair, or with the unfruitful cynicism of our denial, when the authenticity of our faith is challenged.

Further, the Japanese, unlike any other modern people, have received, as it were, the baptism of a renewed youth. Amid the wearied nations—wearied with the exhausting struggles of a thousand years of competitive evolution—this nation, older than any of Europe in its record of political and racial homogeneousness, is yet younger than all in its recent reception of the heritage of a civilisation in the creation and unbuilding of which it has suffered no loss and no exhaustion. Throughout the long toil of this creation and upbuild-

ing this people remained apart and alone, or, as it were, asleep. In their awaking they are capable of an enthusiasm for the characteristic things and modes of European civilisation which is a sign of the freshness and the vigour they are able to bring to bear on the exploitation of ideas and the accomplishment of tasks, ordinary, if not vexing, to the jaded sensibilities of Europe. From this point of view we have in Japan an adult mind inoculated with something of the spirit of youth ; a mature judgment inspired by some of the warmth of adolescent passion. In Europe it often seems that, with a curious eye of regret, or almost of sorrow, we contemplate the close of an epoch of desire. Japan, in most of her moods, sees only the opening of an epoch of hope.

This buoyant mind, hopeful and, for the time being, unconfused, is assisted also by the obviousness of many of the tasks that await it. The completion of the fabric of the Japanese modern era is desiderated by the Japanese leaders themselves as a chief necessity of the State, and an essential and desirable objective of the nation's efforts. Here is offered to Japan that which is always a stay to nations as to individuals in epochs of confusion and crisis—a definite aim and a practical purpose.

But the enviable freshness of Japan's outlook in a time of exhaustion and distraction in Europe, the clearness of her immediate tasks in a time of ragged and confused purpose among the nations, are not miraculous portents of the birth of a new hope for history or of the dawn of a new and more beneficent day on the o'ershaded path of this our mortal journey. These things are, at the utmost, the arrangement of providential circumstance, dim, mysterious, inscrutable.

Furthermore, however, Japan may be said also to offer for the wonder and the admiration of the world a unique type. As a universal fact, she is almost negligible, for she has no new light to offer on the eternal and universal enigmas. Her particular type has, however, no real precedent in history. The national genius of Japan, in so far as it is represented by the ideal and the practice of a particular class—the soldier-leaders who are even to-day most often the actual, as they are always the moral, children of the Samurai—is a genius original in history. The stoic valour and capacity for self-effacement in the interest, or upon the altar, of country, which is the characteristic mark of this genius, is paralleled perhaps by the motive and practice of the knightly class of Sparta. But since, in the Japanese Samurai, this superb character is often joined to the finest artistic sensibility, it may justly be represented in his behalf, that as the Samurai unites to the valour and the discipline of heroic Sparta some of the art-capacity and the art-enthusiasm of splendid Athens, as well as a large measure of the scientific aptitude of modern Europe, he is absolutely original in history. It is proper even to allow of the Japanese, as a people, that in a degree they present the same threefold claim to the regard of the world as is offered by the Samurai type. We behold a people unique in their combination of illustrious qualities and important capacities, even if indeed it be also necessary to set down that we have in the Samurai a type, and in the Japanese a nation, whose unique category of qualities and capacities does not exclude a predilection for peculiar obliquities of conduct which in a brave, artistic, and practical people would be scarcely credible to the European sense without the demonstration of facts.

In their particular aspect let us admit of the Japanese that they are original. It remains true that in the universal they are less than ordinary, and it is certain that only in the originality of their relation to the Universal are men or nations truly original.

The time of the true testing of Japan's view and interpretation of the Universal—the time of the testing of the quality and basis of Japan's conception of and relation to the Universal—is not yet. Hitherto it is her particular type, her peculiar genius—encouraged, animated, inspired in all its originality by peculiar if not abnormal exigencies—that has stood in the forefront of her national endeavour. It is her particular type that has borne the burden of that endeavour.

With the passage of the nation into other regions, other seas—regions pathless and rugged, seas tempestuous and uncharted—Japan's particular type must give place, as the hope and the reliance of the nation, to her idea of the Universal—to her interpretation and expression of the Universal—to the depth, the height, the breadth of her grasp and assurance thereof. Only amid the rugged regions and the tempestuous seas of the remoter course of 'progress,' where the way is confused by a thousand wandering currents of thought or a thousand blind and hopeless paths of inquiry—only when her present era of simple if revolutionary thoughts, and of clear if formidable tasks, shall have passed away before the advance of the age of complexity and confusion towards which her journey lies, may Japan realise that the destiny of nations is not so much in the charge of their particular and original qualities, as in the truth, the reality, the sincerity of their relation to the Universal which is God.

There is no new 'beginning' of history in Japan,

because there is there no new concept or interpretation of man's relation to the Universal—in other words, no new religion.

The strength and the potency of the world remain with Europe. They do not find a new centre, a re-organisation or a reconcentration, in Japan. For in Europe—in the mind and in the heart of Europe—there is a concept and image of the Universal that guarantees the essential permanence of the European idea against every particular type and every peculiar originality. That concept and image may undergo modification and re-interpretation, but their ultimate reference and authority being concrete Personality, they are for ever capable of a renewal and re-organisation impossible to any particular type or to any peculiar genius which has no universal relationship or reference, and no universal motive.



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